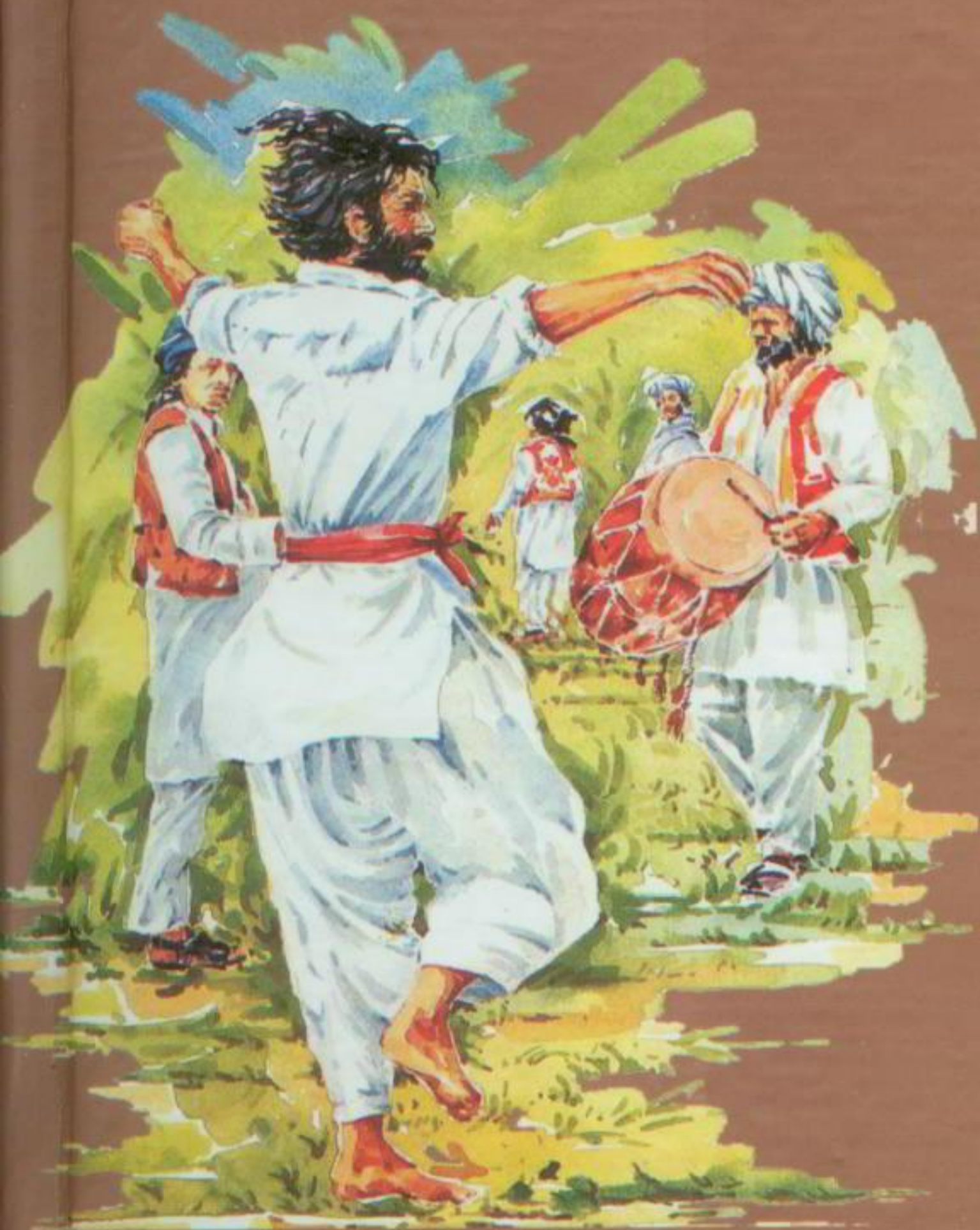


INTRODUCTION TO PASHTUN CULTURE

(A Collection of Essays)



Dr. Raj Wali Shah Khattak

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Dr. Professor Raj Wali Shah Khattak

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Acknowledgement

Through my many years of service in the University of Peshawar it has been my joy and privilege to promote Pashto language and literature. One part of this task has the preparation and delivery of lectures in English to gatherings of scholars in Pakistan and overseas.

My lecture notes – some prepared in the days of typewriters – have sat in file folders gathering dust. It is therefore, a great delight for me to have these lectures turned into essays and presented in the pages of this book.

I wish to sincerely thank Mrs. Susan Smith, Mr. Geoffrey Smith and all the staff of the InterLit Foundation, for their help in the preparation of *An Introduction to Pakhtun Culture*. The InterLit Foundation took my typed-texts and computerised them, and then under Mrs. Smith's direction, edited the text and prepared it in the format in which it now stands. In addition, they worked on the phonetic pronounciations, added footnotes and an Index. I appreciate all the work that the InterLit Foundation does to serve Pashto language and literature.

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October, 2010

Preface

A lecture is for a brief moment in time. An audience is moved by what they hear, as an expert in the field presents his or her opinions on a subject. Both audience and lecturer then move on to other subjects, and all that research and expertise simply becomes another memory on the path of knowledge.

When Dr. Prof. Raj Wali Shah Khattak presented me with his folder of lecture notes, I was interested to learn from their pages. As a long-term resident in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa I am always keen to know more about the great tribe of the Pakhtuns in whose midst I live and whose daily lives I observe from my slightly removed position as a guest in this wonderful country. I have learned a great deal.

The initial essays in *An Introduction to Pakhtun Culture* focus on language and culture. I felt that I stood side-by-side with the different poets and scholars quoted by Dr. Prof. Khattak speaking of their love of their homeland:

په هر چا خپل وطن کشمير دے

To each person, his own country is Kashmir.

Pakhtuns are men and women of honor and faith, famous for their pride, martial qualities, shrewdness and independence. Their honor and faith is inextricably linked with their love of the soil from which they sprang.

I also came to understand a little more of the 'softer' side of the Pakhtun identity reflected in Pakhto poetry, music and dance. As Dr. Prof. Khattak writes, 'even the toughest Pakhtun' will practice playing music in his *hujra* on the *rabāb* or *sitār* accompanied by the beating of a *mangay* (water pot) in

place of a drum, singing traditional folksongs – all for his own enjoyment and that of his friends and family. I have personally witnessed this joy of poetry, music and dance expressed in spontaneous poetry readings and musical evenings.

In the same way, Dr. Prof. Khattak opened up for me a deeper understanding of the role of *Pakhtunwali* in the fabric of Pakhtun life. I came to see that *Pakhtunwali* / Pashto are far more than the 'code' of the Pakhtuns, although that gives us 'foreigners' a hook on which to hang these terms. *Pakhtunwali* / Pashto is the blood that beats in the veins of every Pakhtun and the eyes through which the rest of the world is viewed. *Pakhtunwali* / Pashto embrace the customs, morality and behavior – the 'culture' of being a Pakhtun. And at the heart of this culture is honor.

پښتون چې پښتو نه لري زمکه دې پرې ډکه شي

When a Pakhtun has no *Pakhto*, may he fill the hollows of the earth.

I found the essays where Dr. Prof. Khattak looks at the stand Pakhtuns have made to protect their language and culture very thought provoking. Just one example: as my own roots are in England, the references to the days of the British rule in the Indian sub-continent and specifically in the North West had me looking in my history books and internet sources for more information. I was challenged to look afresh at the ways in which 'rule' cuts across 'culture' and at the consequences that follow the clash of these two powerful forces. I also then followed the uneasy history of the Frontier in the days that followed the birth of the country of Pakistan.

The place of the *jirga* in bringing together rule and culture in order to accomplish a peaceful resolution to conflict is very well presented in *An Introduction To Pakhtun Culture*; and this is something that the international community is trying to grapple with and participate in, at least in the Afghan context, as with the example of the *Loya Jirga* in Bonn in December 2001.

Dr. Prof. Khattak's deep love of poetry shines out from the pages of this book. I was introduced to Pakhtun poets such as Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak and Hamza Shinwari, as well as meeting old friends, like Abdur Rahman Baba. Again, the biographical details had me hungry and thirsty to know more about the times in which they lived as well as the poetry that came as a response to those times.

These essays are no longer passing moments in time, but have become a part of the recorded history of Pakhtun language and literature; many now will have the opportunity to learn more about Pakhtun culture and history.

Susan Smith

Director, InterLit Foundation

Peshawar, 2010

Guide to Pronunciation

In this book the system for transliteration of the Journal of Middle Eastern Studies has been adopted as a guide to pronunciation, with some modifications. As pronunciation varies considerably across Pakhtun areas, these transcriptions should be viewed as a guide, not an exact representation.

Where a word in Pashto has become familiar to the English-speaking world (for example, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*), the transliteration does not follow the guide below, but instead uses spelling most common in English language newspapers.

Written	Pronounced	Examples in Pashto
Vowels		
ā	/a/ (very long), e.g. father (UK), ah	<i>pāk, kitāb, halāl</i>
a	/a/ (short), e.g. apart (USA)	<i>pashto, nawe, dushman</i>
ə	/u/ (short), the <i>schwa</i> sound, e.g. putty, us	<i>stərga, tər, wayəl</i>
e	/a/ (long, not a diphthong) e.g. eight, bait	<i>ebādat, wraze, che</i>
i	covers a range from short /i/ to long /ee/, e.g. pin, pen, litre	<i>pir, imān</i>
o	/o/ (long), e.g. rose, boat (USA), note	<i>tsok, khole, obə</i>
u	/oo/, as in food, boot, rule	<i>wukra, kum, hindu</i>
ey	/a/ (very long, open), e.g. they, day	<i>sarey, malgarey, lidəley</i>
ay	e.g. my, buy, site; sometimes herein as /ai/	<i>mayen, ghayrat, khoday</i>
əy	---	<i>ḍoḍəy, maṛəy, kāfirəy</i>
oy	e.g. toy	<i>zoy, soya, toyawəl</i>

aw	e.g. <i>ouch, owe</i>	<i>yaw, wāwra, dawlat</i>
Consonants		
t	dental /t/ (Pashto <i>te</i> and <i>twe</i>)	<i>tez, takht, bakhtawar</i>
s	(Pashto <i>se</i> and <i>sin</i>)	<i>saba, samdasti, korsay</i>
g	(Pashto <i>gaf</i> and <i>ge</i>)	<i>gilās, gumanz</i>
z	(Pashto <i>ze, zawad</i> and <i>zwe</i>)	<i>zikar, zāmān, muzakar</i>
kh	Scottish <i>loch</i> , (Pashto <i>khe</i> and <i>khin</i>)	<i>khalaq, makhluq</i>
ʈ	the retroflex or hard /t/	<i>ṭāl, jaṭka, ṭamaṭar</i>
ɖ	the retroflex or hard /d/	<i>ḍāl, ḍālār, ḍāṇḍey</i>
ɳ	the retroflex or hard /n/	<i>pāṇa, kāṇey</i>
ɽ	the retroflex or hard /r/, similar to the ending of the name <i>Carl</i>	<i>mār, r̥und, marwand</i>
ch	e.g. <i>church</i>	<i>chula, chokey, chāy</i>
ts	e.g. <i>hats, cats</i>	<i>tsa, tsinga, katsura</i>
sh	e.g. <i>sheep</i>	<i>shpa, māshum</i>
dz	often pronounced /z/	<i>mendz</i>
zh	--	--
gh	the guttural voiced counterpart to the /kh/	<i>ghwag, mārgħa</i>
j	e.g. <i>Jim, join</i>	<i>jangla, bāja</i>
w	aspirated /w/, between /v/ and /w/	<i>wegān, wakil, mashwara</i>

An Introduction to Pakhtun Culture

Before presenting my remarks about Pakhtun (Pashtun) culture, I would like to say a few elementary things about the term "culture" itself.

"Culture" is, in a sense, a contemporary term; before the nineteenth century, it did not hold a vivid place in the consciousness of writers. However, it has acquired great popularity during the past two centuries.

Intellectuals and scholars have tended to define "culture" in a variety of ways. As a result, thus far, no standard or agreed upon definition of the term has emerged. In addition, anthropologists have defined the term in a way that keeps in view their distinct purposes, resulting in yet another definition of the term. The result has been some confusion about the meaning of the word "culture". A part of this confusion is that everything from art to agriculture, including music, painting and architecture, are in some way said to be related to culture.

"Culture" is an aspect of human behaviour. It is a way of behaving that includes all our habits, actions, ideas and values; everything that is dear to us as an organized social group or as members of a family. Acting on these values and ideas not only shapes our standard of living, but also determines the identity of the cultural group.

It appears as though nature not only provides a geographical environment to a race or a human group, but also helps create a certain way of living within that geographical environment. People living in a particular environment come to possess a certain distinct temperament and mentality. Given this point of view, the environment provided by nature plays its role in shaping the mentality of the people. It gives them a particular psychology. If the way of living in a geographical environment is called "culture", then all

nations develop a moral code in consonance with its own mentality and psychology. It creates a philosophy of good and evil and, in the light of its own ideas, arranges a system of values for itself. All this takes place in the context of the material and spiritual needs of the people. That is how customs and traditions emerge. Modes of dress develop that are not only a defence against the extremities of weather, but also reflect aesthetic and moral standards.

A sense of beauty is of the highest significance to the intellectual distinctions of a people's consciousness. It is the sense of beauty that plays a basic role in shaping the identity of a people's way of living. Indeed, aesthetic sense is reflected in a people's morals and habits. However, aesthetic taste does not simply relate to beauty alone, it also has to do with a certain sublime power called *jalāl*. Indeed this sublime power is very much a part of beauty and where there is the greatest emphasis on this power, the culture tends to be male oriented, though not necessarily male-dominated.

Pakhtuns have terms like *nartob* and *saritob* that reflect the highest values of this nation. Although these two terms mean 'manliness', they are not applied to men alone; the terms are also used for women where appropriate. In other words, women can have the qualities of *nartob* and *saritob* or gentility. In fact, if a man lacks these qualities, he is called *muzi* or a person without honour. Such a person is definitely considered to be weaker than a woman.

Pashto and Pakhtunwali

Before we look into the higher and positive values of Pakhtuns, let us briefly examine Pashto and *Pakhtunwali*, which are both names for Pakhtun culture. Climate and geographical conditions have played a significant role in shaping Pakhtun culture. The Pakhtun areas lie between 60° to 73° longitude and from 26° to 36° latitude. This region is divided into different geographical configurations and regions. Pakhtuns live on both sides of the Durand Line. Various tribes live in the North West of Pakistan and the

Eastern regions of Afghanistan. In addition, many scattered tribes live in the tribal pockets of North Eastern Pakistan. In the far-flung North West of Afghanistan and in some of its South Western regions we find Pakhtun tribes. Also in the Indian states of Rampur and in Rohailkhand we find sizable Pakhtun populations, (although for the most part they no longer speak Pashto).

Geographically, the Pakhtuns are surrounded by the Karakoram ranges in the north east, and the Hindu Kush Mountains in the north and north west are. The extreme west and south are mostly desolate deserts and therefore uninhabited. In the east, we find the lofty peaks of the Himalayas. The historic Oxus River flows in the north; the river Indus is in the east and the Helmand and Harirod rivers flow in the south.

This is the land of the Pakhtuns, inhabited by about 39 million Pakhtuns or Afghans. This is one nation. Their culture is known as "Pashto", which is also their language, and backbone of their culture. In fact, it is the language, which, in a way, has kept the culture alive. The "Pashto" or code of honour of these tribes is called *Pakhtunwali*. One might refer to it as the unwritten constitution of this culture. This code includes all their traditions, customs and, above all, spiritual values. True, that thus far there is no arrangement for the teaching of this code, but it covers all aspects of daily life from dress to all activities in times of war and peace.

Like the people, this land of Pakhtuns is also full of variety, and could be described as 'multicoloured'. The severe heat of valleys and plains, the Alpine cold of the hills, mountains and extreme weather of desolate deserts, have all contributed to the shaping of Pakhtun's psyche, including the making of extremists. Yet these same factors have brought them closer to nature as well. Perhaps it was for them that Iqbal said:

The higher objectives of Nature are protected in the activities of desert dwellers or men living in the mountains.

The south and north of the Pakhtun areas are referred to as 'upper' and 'lower', or *lar* and *bar* in the Pashto language. *lar* means the Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan and *bar* the Pakhtunkhwa of Afghanistan. Bajaur and Khyber, Tochi, Kurram, Gomal and Bolan are the famous passes which connect the Pakhtuns living on both sides of the Durand Line. Historically, this region has been referred to as Roh, Rohistan, Yaghistan, Afghana and Pakhtunkhwa.

Regarding the significance of this region and people in Asia, Iqbal has stated:¹

Asia is a structure of clay and water. The Afghan nation is the heart of this structure.

The disruption of Afghans is the disruption of Asia, while liberty of Afghans means liberation for Asia.

It is from this kind of background that the Pakhtun culture has emerged. This culture is poor but self-respecting and it is known for its toughness and religiosity. All this makes for a conservative social system. Pakhtuns are a frugal people but on special occasions, they tend to show extreme generosity. They attach great importance to national pride and family honour. Their insistence upon equality and their intense democratic spirit often leads to fights and competition. This way of life and psychology has led some people to call Pakhtun society "ordered anarchy".

Ghani Khan in his particular style comments humorously about the nature of the Pakhtuns: "Being direct and rather thick between the ears, every Pakhtun imagines he is Alexander the Great and wants the world to admit it. The result is a constant struggle between cousin and cousin, brother and brother and quite often between father and son. This has proved his sole undoing through the ages. They have not succeeded in being a great nation

¹ Javed Nama, p. 177-78.

because there is a Jinnah² in every home, who would rather burn his own house than see his brother rule it.³

All norms, values, traditions and practices fall under one comprehensive system, which is referred to as *Pakhtunwali*. The family, the clan and the tribe all reflect this comprehensive system. *Pakhtunwali* is derived from the term 'Pashtun' (a dialectical variation of the word 'Pakhtun'). Pashtun might be said to be comprised of the following:

- پ *pey* for *pat*, which means 'fellowship' or 'comradeship'
- ش *sheen* for *shegarha*, which means 'doing good to others or to the needy'
- ت *tey* for *tura*, which literally means 'sword' and stands for 'bravery'
- و *waw* for *wafa*, which means 'fidelity to one's commitments'
- ن *nun* for *nang*, which means 'honour'

From this point of view, the essence or meaning of the term Pakhtun consists in chivalry, courage, fidelity and honour. These are the qualities which shape the character of Pakhtun society.

In addition hospitality (*melmustyā*), council of elders (*jirga*), modesty (*sharam*, *hayā*), revenge (*badal*), taunt (*peghor*), seeking forgiveness in a feud (*nanawati*), fear, shame, honour of the family (*nang*, *nāmus*), zeal, courage and manliness (*ghayrat*, *tura*) etc, are terms which define Pakhtun culture. As noted earlier, comradeship, doing good to others, bravery, fidelity and honour are fundamental values of Pakhtun culture. Their explanation and the historical events related to them cannot be addressed in this brief essay because such an effort requires an account of a whole philosophy of life. In summary, however, it is these values that have given a special character to the Pakhtun.

² Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948) the founder of Pakistan; often referred to by his official title of Quaid-e-Azam ('Great Leader').

³ *The Pathans: A sketch*, p. 41.

In addition, the same values which are reflected in Pakhtun customs, traditions and worship are also manifest in their arts and literature. Pakhtuns, after accepting Islam, have committed themselves to literature alone among the fine arts. Among the professions, they have adopted only agriculture and soldiery "Like the Greek he is a great poet and a great warrior. Like the Greeks almost all his wars are over women."⁴ Other professions are generally ignored by Pakhtuns, but where they are in place Pakhtuns (knowing their own mentality) have created arts in which Pakhtun character is reflected.

As mentioned above, Pakhtun culture is male oriented. In power they see greater beauty than beauty itself. Delicate and soft jobs are left to women. However, in special circumstances women might have to take up tough agriculture-related jobs as well. Pakhtuns are realists in their ordinary life and prize strength and perseverance. This is reflected in their art. There is a lack of paintings, perhaps because that form of artistic expression is viewed as un-Islamic. However, the sculptures of the Gandhara civilization reflect that durability which has remained a part of Pakhtun culture since pre-Islamic times. "Probably he was a good sculptor and a poor Buddhist"⁵

There are few monuments or architectural wonders in Pakhtun lands. The reason, perhaps, is that Pakhtuns have never favoured the building of expensive homes. Life for them is basically impermanent, in part because of the place of enmity and revenge (*tarburwali*) in their society. A Pakhtun is often forced by these things to abandon his house or it may be destroyed by the tribal *jirga* as a punishment. Expensive houses are built by those who are either very strong or very compromising. But among Pakhtuns compromise is rarely tolerated.

Pakhtuns like the decoration of their homes and appreciate ornamentation, but they prefer durability to decoration. The walls of their houses are high, their doors are strong and security arrangements are reflected

⁴ *The Pathans: A sketch*, p. 4.

⁵ *The Pathans: A sketch*, p. 5.

in their architecture in a significant manner.

They are very serious about their dress; both men and women both like modest clothing. They prefer clothes which not only give them identity but are also modest. The turban and shawl have certain spiritual significance and are considered as symbols of honour. Not everyone deserves them. That is why Khushal Khan Khattak has said:

چي دستار تري هزار دي
د دستار سري په شمار دي

che dāstār tarī hazār de

da dāstār sare pa shmār de

Those who tie a turban are in (the) thousands.

Those who understand its responsibility are only a few.

About a shawl a Pashto *tappa* says;

د کونډ تانه پرونه سپک وي
که زه ئې دروند پسرؤم سيلی ئې ورينه

da kunde paṛoonay spak vi

ka za ye droond pasarwum silai ye wrina

The shawl of a widow is always light in weight;

Though I put it on heavily (tightly), still it is carried away by wind.

Pakhtun culture has its own arts and crafts related to things of daily use.

These things not only have an artistic value but reflect Pakhtun ways of behaviour. In particular the things used in the *hujra* or guest house have this cultural quality.

While the *hujra* is a cultural institution for Pakhtuns, the mosque is the place of worship and religious ceremony. Similarly *kor* (home) and *godar* (water spring) are the province of women. All cultural activities in these places are in the purview of women.

Pakhtun culture has a long history. Its ideas have been transmitted through generations mostly by word of mouth. In the Pakhtun lands, it is not only the villages, towns and cities which are important. Every path, every tree, every rock and hill and every water spring has historical significance in this land. With all these is associated some historical or cultural event and all these events have been described in a romantic way in Pashto folklore.

Life is not all that easy in the land of Pakhtuns. Abiding by the customs and traditions, living with the values of *Pakhtunwali*, attending to the needs of the *hujra* and mosque and the constant anxiety to protect one's honour require an extremely dynamic life. Still the real Pakhtun loves this life and his motherland. A Pakhtun is not greatly impressed by material gains. For him an honourable life according to the values of *Pakhtunwali* is much more important. As the great Khushal Khan Khattak said after his travels to India:

که په هند کښې چنبا گل دې تر دا گل د وطن خارښه
چې پکښې خواږه یاران دي پېښور تر هر د یار ښه

ka pa hind ke chambā gul dey, tar dā gul da watan khār khu

che pake khwagu yārān de Pekhawar tar har diyār khu

No matter if India has jasmine flowers in it,
The thorns of the motherland are dearer and better than these flowers.

That sweet friends live in this town,
My city Peshawar is dearer and better than all other cities.

The great Khushal also informs us about the aesthetic standards of the Pakhtuns as follows:

پښتنې جونه مې ولیدې په سترگو
څوک چې ترکې د خطا ستاڼي خطا دي

pakhtaney joona me olidey pa stargo

sok che turki da khatā stayi khatā de

After having seen the beauty of Pakhtun girls
I insist that no other beauty is comparable to them.

Those who praise others are mistaken

Similarly the great Durrani king Ahmad Shah Abdali has given expression to this love for the lands and hills of the region by saying:

د ډيلي تخت هېرومه چې رايا د کرم
زه د ښکلي پښتونخواه د غروسرونه

da Delhi takht herawuma che rāyad krum

zu da khkule Pakhtunkhwa da ghro saroonā

As I recall the proud peaks of the hills of Pakhtunkhwa
The significance of the throne of Delhi comes to nothing in comparison.

Another more recent poet Ghani Khan celebrates the simplicity of Pakhtun homes and towns as follows:

مالیدلي د فرنگ ښکلی جهازونه
 چې ترې لاندې یې غورزنگ وهي سیندونه
 مالیدلي محلوڼه د لندن
 جینکۍ یې دي آزادي گلبدن
 مالیدلي د اتلي ښائسته ښارونه
 سره انګور سره یې شراب او سره گلوڼه
 مالیدلي د اتلي ښائسته ښارونه
 سره انګور سره یې شراب او سره گلوڼه
 مالیدلي امریکه کښې دي ښارونه
 چې وریځو ته یې رسي مکانونه
 مالیدلي تاج محل غوټۍ د گلو
 د دیلي ښکلي ښارونه د مغلو
 خو چې اووینم دا خپل د خټو گور
 رانه هېرشي د دنیا ښارونه نور
 دا نری تنګې کوڅې زما د کلي
 ورته څه دي د دنیا ښارونه ښکلي

mā lidāle da farang khkule jyāzoona
che tre lānde ye ghorzang wahe sindoona
mā lidāle mahaloona da London
jinakai ye di āzāde gulbadan
mā lidāle da itly khaista khāroona
sru angoor sru ye sharab aw sru guloona
mā lidāli amrika ke de khāroona
che waryāzo ta ye rase makānoona

mā lidālay taj mahal ghutay da gulo
da delhi khkule khāroona da mughalo
kho che wowinam dā khpal da khato kor
ra na hir she da dunyā khāroona nor

dā naray tange kose zamā da kale
warta sa di da dunyā khāroona khkule

I have seen the beautiful British ships
 Underneath which flow the waves of rivers
 I have seen the palaces of London,
 Where free and beautiful girls reside.

I have seen the beauty of Italian cities
where red vineyards, red wine and red flowers abound.

The American cities are also known to me
Whose sky scrapers reach out to the clouds.

I have also seen the Taj Mahal, blossoming like a flower,
And the palaces of Delhi constructed by great Mughals,

As I look at my mud house

All the cities of the world vanish into oblivion.

However, the narrow and small streets of my village
Are superior in comparison to all the beautiful cities of the world.

However, all this is changing rapidly today. During the last half century, the process of cultural change as well as destruction has been at work. This has resulted in the weakening of cultural institutions. The *hujra*, the mosque and the home are undergoing change.

One factor that contributes towards this instability is the lack of proper teaching of Pakhtun culture. Very few systematic efforts have been made to understand Pakhtun traditions and their philosophical foundations. The old order is being replaced by disorder. Perhaps this is all because of the external cultural onslaught. Of course we can face this cultural onslaught and change its direction. But what else can a serious and sincere Afghan say except this Pashto *tappa*.

د تورو جنگ وے ما به وکړے
د نصیب جنگ دے وار خطا ولاړه یمه

da tooro jang way mā ba wakray

da nasib jang day wārkhatā walārayuma

If it was a matter of fighting with swords, I would have fought it out. However, in this war of fate, which has come upon me, I am standing all lost and dazed.



Pakhtuns: Their Culture, Language and Literature

Many books, theses and research articles have been written on Pakhtuns and their culture. Much of this research has won international recognition and is certainly valuable work. While almost all of the writers and researchers are 'outsiders', they have tried to make known a true picture of the people and their traditions, even if at times they have misunderstood some aspects of the culture including some the provisions of *Pakhtunwali*. Yet Pakhtuns owe a lot to them for their honest research and wonderful work. It is these researchers who have introduced Pakhtuns to the outside world. Pakhtuns think that they have still not been understood or properly discovered, for which, I think, nobody can be blamed except Pakhtuns themselves.

With a unique and distinct culture, the Pakhtuns have on their own soil for thousands of years.⁶ They have a particular civilization, social norms, customs and traditions. Their language, Pashto, is the backbone of their society. It is this Pashto language from which the Pakhtun nation and the culture of *Pakhtunwali* have emerged. All their oral traditions are preserved in this language. Every custom has its own particular meaning, called *narkh* in Pashto. So one can leave the land, but cannot go against the *narkh*. Pakhtuns live with these *narkhs* or traditions in particular style with reference to a proud history.

⁶ *Da Pakhto zhabe aw adab moaqaf da markazi Asia da khalko pa tamaddunoono ke* (The status of Pashto language and literature in Central Asian civilizations). p. 49. Da Allama Pohand Habibi Maqale lurhai barkha, Editor Mati Ullah Rohyal, Kandahar, Vol:1, 1382

Pakhtuns are proud of their history, because they ruled the subcontinent of India for centuries or have been helpful to the kings who ruled the subcontinent. They conquered the lands of India and were in the forefront of the armies of every conqueror.⁷ Pakhtuns have a *Weltanschauung*; a world outlook that is uniquely their own. The Ghaznavites, Ghoris, Suris, Khiljis and Lodhis established their kingdoms with the support of Pakhtun forces, so much so that the Mughals were supported by the Pakhtuns in wresting India from the hands of their Lodhi brethren. They would always be in the forefront of any battle or war fought in the subcontinent. Though the Pakhtuns are famous as warrior people, they have established great civilizations in the past. Their connections to the Buddhist and Zoroastrian civilizations have been traced by some historians. Although little is known about them in the prehistoric ages, recent history shows their contribution towards the civilization of the Indian subcontinent.

Magnificent forts, buildings and other historical monuments tell about the golden eras of their history. Their colonies in central India, and states like Rohilkhand, talk of their past glory in India.

Pakhtuns not only fought wars to establish kingdoms. The most famous Sufis and saints of India have Pakhtun origin. They spread the light of spirituality in India, particularly by spreading the teachings of Islam in the sub-continent. Their graves are still famous centres of spirituality. Pakhtun scholars, writers and poets have contributed a great deal towards the culture of politeness in India. Many Pakhtuns migrated at different times to India and settled there, where they laid the foundations of Islamic civilization and taught the principles of Islam to the local community.

Pakhtuns are a broadminded and cooperative people, and have always worked for the welfare of humanity. A Pakhtun has such a broad spirit and

⁷ "da Bahlol aw da Sher Shah khabarey awrum / che pa Hind ke Pukhtna wo bādshahān shpag awya peṛai ye hassey bādshahi wa / che pa dwi pore drust khalak wo hayrān." (Khushal Khan Khattak)

Pakhtuns: Their Culture, Language and Literature

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capacity that he lifts the burdens of others on to his shoulders. This quality of the Pukhtuns is illustrated in a proverb, which says,

A Pakhtun never picks up a light weight

That is why if a weight of another is put on his shoulders; he will carry it happily, maybe illustrating the situation by a proverb,

If a little more weight is added to the back of a camel, it doesn't matter.

A true Pakhtun will always wish good for others. Pakhtuns always have a passion for self-sacrifice, and this is found in Pashto tales, proverbs and folklore. One of the Pashto *tappas* (a famous folk genre) says:

ka me zara sharhai pa sar da janana taa ba pa bakhmalo ke satama

My dear friend! Though I myself am wearing a rough blanket,
I will keep you in a shawl of velvet".

Hafiz Rahmat Khan Rohaila writes in his book *Khulasatul Ansaab* that Pakhtuns have a tradition of spreading carpets for others while they would rather sit on a straw mat. Only one example of Pakhtun selflessness is needed from Roh, the land of the Pakhtuns. This is of the Afridis, who wear shoes of grass and rough clothes while guarding Hindus laden with gold and silver.

It is astonishing that today the world is not aware of the Pukhtuns and their politeness. One reason for this is that the Mughals caused the Pakhtuns, who ruled India for centuries, to be laughed at and despised. This was because of political rivalry between Pakhtuns and Mughals. Mughal court historians were ordered to write impolite and uncivilized things about Pakhtuns. After the Mughals, this campaign was carried on by the British, and the communication of Pakhtuns with India was almost broken. They were divided and disunited. The age-long trade and commercial relations of the Pakhtuns with the Deccan (southern India), northern India and Central

Asia were brought to an end at the time of the British rule. The Lohani, Ghilji and Sarhaban tribes had trade relations with Samarqand, Kokhand, Khiva, Khutan, Bukhara, Badakhshan, Merv, Tashkent and other commercial centres in Central Asia as well as with Shikarpur, Multan, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Golkand, Bijapur and Bengal in the Indian sub-Continent, but were deprived of these relations which resulted in their economic destruction. They were politically blockaded and defamed outside of their land. Iqbal has pointed to it in one of his couplets:

Those youth who would establish kingdoms,
were confined to their own mountains.

This 'confinement' was not of their own making, but the result of political conditions created by the advancement of the British from the South and Russia from the North. D.N. Wilber writes about Pakhtuns and their land, "The land of tribal tradition and love of liberty has a turbulent but stirring history and a glorious ancient past."

Before the British, the Sikhs treacherously occupied an area of the Pakhtuns for a short period, but their rule was limited only to the city of Peshawar. Though the Pakhtuns at that time were fighting among themselves, it has been the tradition that whenever attacked from outside, they make a truce for a season and collectively fight the invaders. This kind of temporary truce or cease fire is called *tiga* in Pashto. Many battles were fought with the Sikhs.

After the Sikhs came the British who occupied only those parts of Pakhtunkhwa which were under Sikh control; then a new series of battles started with the British Indian Empire. Before the British, Pakhtuns had been fighting with the Mughals. The impact of this continuous fighting was both economic weakness for Pakhtuns and their isolation from the rest of the world.

The Great Game was being played between Russia and the British in the land of the Pakhtuns. The First, Second and Third Afghan Wars affected the

people in multiple dimensions. These wars, being fought by the British as part of their Great Game, paved the way for many social, political, cultural and economic changes, and also, to some extent, geographical changes as well. As a result of these wars, the land of Pakhtunkhwa was divided. In other words, a nation was divided.

The Durand Line was drawn between the Pakhtuns in 1893, but long before that, the British government had begun political strategies to change the lar Pakhtuns. The major cultural change was the introduction of Urdu as the medium of instruction in schools in Pakhtunkhwa instead of Pashto, which is the mother tongue of the people. The British government wanted to amalgamate the area under their Indian Empire, because of its strategic significance, but they faced severe resistance in doing so, particularly in the tribal areas. A new series of battles called ghaza or lams were started with the British in different pockets of the tribal belt. This was an emergency situation for all Pakhtuns. Instead of progressing politically, socially and culturally, the Pakhtuns were caught in consecutive wars. The Pakhtuns staunchly resisted the advancement of British troops. To a great extent they were successful, but not knowing political diplomacy they were ultimately so weakened that they were led to make treaties because they preferred the British to the Russians. On the other side, the Afghan government had become so weak that it had to compromise with these two great powers of the time and the main players of the Great Game.

In lower Pakhtunkhwa, Waziristan, Khyber, Tirah, Mohmand, Swat, Bajaur, Malakand, Buner and Ambela were the battlefields where wars with the British were fought, while in upper Pakhtunkhwa, in Kandahar, Maiwand, Ghazni, Jalalabad and Kabul, resistance continued for a long time. These wars caused a lot of misery for ordinary people. Once a powerful nation, Pakhtunkhwa was divided into two parts. (Nowadays it is further divided into four). As a result Pakhtun language and culture suffered.

This unfortunate nation has always been caught-up in the wars of others, and continues to suffer even through to this present time. Though current circumstances are somewhat different to the past, fighting still continues.

This is the fate of the Pakhtuns. Though much has been written about the situation of the people, and research has been carried out by many Western scholars; and though most of these writers have been impartial, introducing Pakhtuns in their true perspective, it is also a fact that prejudiced and biased writers have damaged the Pakhtun image in the outside world particularly Hindu and Mughal writers.

These distortions of history, together with politically vested interests, have depicted the Pakhtuns solely as warriors, and their other national characteristics and values, such as aesthetic taste and spiritual worth, glossed over. D. N. Wilber writes, "Their background can make them very treacherous and dangerous enemies of those who try to bully or deceive them." The same writer says in his book about their land, "Sometimes called the crossroads of Asia, Pakhtun lands have been a mixing bowl and battleground for a great variety of Central Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian and even European invaders and settlers."⁸ This is the land of the Pakhtuns, who love their soil more than any other nation on earth.

Their language also has a very rich history, as shown in Pashto literature. Their culture is a unique culture and they rightly proud of it. They are very romantic people and express their feelings in their language. All of this means that Pakhtuns will never fully acclimatize to should they live in any other part of the world.

"Pashto" is both the name of the language and a term for a particular aspect of Pakhtun culture. The existence of the Pakhtun nation is due to its language Pashto. In the same way, 'Pakhtun' is both the name of a people and a race, and also a term for a standard of character. This particular life style, character and nationhood are thought to be the basic elements of a unique civilization, is called *Pakhtunwali*. *Pakhtunwali* is the culture and way of life of the Pakhtuns, in which all the laws relating to social life are present in unwritten form. Though not a religion, it is a very sacred code of conduct.

⁸ *Afghanistan, its People, its Society, its Culture*, p.5, 24. D. N. Wilber 1962

Pakhtuns love their Pashto so much that it has almost gained the status of a religion. It is so dear to the Pakhtuns that sometimes and in some special circumstances they call it a 'fifth religion' (this is because all Pakhtuns are followers of the four creeds of Islam). Only one who has the courage to live a life according to the laws of *Pakhtunwali*, or is able to live like a Pakhtun, can be called a true Pakhtun. Pashto is like a qualification, and those who qualify deserve the title of 'Pakhtun'. Pashto, Pakhtuns and *Pakhtunwali* are inseparable and are interdependent.

The language Pashto is said to be 5,000 years old. Researchers and linguists have presented different theories about the origin of the race and their language. If the formation of a nation is based on language, then Pakhtuns are an Aryan race, because Pashto is an Aryan language.⁹ Pashto is an ancient language in the group of Indo-Iranian languages, though some of the Afghan scholars are critical about the term Indo-Iranian. To them, Pashto is so ancient that when Aryans migrated from the west to the east some 2,500 years ago, Pashto speakers were left in their original abode of Afghanistan.

Though Pakhtuns, in the international community, are famous as warriors and as a martial race and their history is full of wars and battles, the history of their language and literature is also vibrant. To understand Pakhtuns, it is essential to know their language Pashto. Pashto is the way of life of the people as well as their language, therefore the history of the Pashto language cannot be separated from the history of the people. Despite living for almost one hundred years with the British, and having close relations with them, Pakhtuns are still a dilemma for the whole world (as well as for themselves).

Much has been spoken and written about the Pakhtuns and their country, but this research has hardly scratched the surface. There is a need for more in-depth research. It is a fact that the history of the Pakhtuns has never been

brought to light. In this regard, only stories, tales and anecdotes are found. For example, the accounts of the deeds performed by Pakhtun generals and kings far away from their country, in which the accession to the throne of Delhi is a part, includes many details, but these simply small events in the long story of the Pakhtuns.

Pakhtuns have lived for centuries in the narrow land between the Indian subcontinent and Khorasan, in the region where great civilizations have encountered each other. Invading forces have many times assaulted their mountain houses like sea storms. Though conquerors have passed through their land to establish great kingdoms, the Pakhtuns, who are the guardians, have never had the opportunity to look at their own history. The country of the Pakhtuns has no history which in modern times could be called a continuous history. For many centuries, no one wrote down a systematic history of the Pakhtuns; neither the Pakhtuns themselves nor those who passed through this area.¹⁰

Ghani Khan says: "The Pakhtuns have no written history, but they have thousands of ruins where the carved stones tell their story to anyone who would care to listen."¹¹ As Pakhtuns reside in the mountains called 'Roh' or 'Rohistan' knowledge of them has now been termed 'Rohology'.

'Rohology' is the study of Pakhtuns and their culture. Roh is the ancient name of their land. It is a geographic unit, a territory between two mighty rivers; that is the Amu Darya and the Indus of Central and South Asia. This mass of land is mainly plateau or high mountains and is politically divided into Afghanistan and the two western provinces of Pakistan. This whole area has distinct geological, geographical, anthropological, archaeological, historical, linguistic, social, cultural and religious features. Its flora and fauna and its climatic regions have unique and specific distinctions. Roh is the cradle of some of the most ancient human civilizations. Though the name of

⁹ *De Pakhto zhabe aw adab moaqaf da markazi Asia da khalko pa tamaddunoono ke Habibi*, p.49.

¹⁰ Urdu translation of "The Pathans" by Sir Olaf Caroe, Syed Mahboob Ali.

¹¹ *The Pathans: A sketch*, p. 5.

the area is popularly known as 'Pakhtunkhwa', which means the place of the Pakhtuns, historically it was known by its ancient Sanskrit name 'Rohitya-Giri' later abbreviated to Roh: hence 'Rohology' means the study and knowledge of Roh.¹²

Regarding their geographic location,¹³ the Pakhtuns lived in those mountains and high plateaus which were mentioned by Hafiz Rahmat Khan Rohaila in his book *Khulasatul Ansaab* as follows:

"All the abodes of the Pakhtuns are situated between Iran, Toran and Hind and Sindh. Their eastern limit is Kashmir and the western one is the Helmand River which flows near Herat. Between these two countries there is a distance of about two and a half months. Its northern limit is Qashqar (Chitral) and the southern is the area of Bhakkar of Barohi, Baluchistan. All the land situated in between these limits is called Roh".

When the inhabitants of Roh established their colonies in India, they gave it the name of Rohailkand. These Rohailas, Afghans or Pakhtuns are those people who live in a most significant piece of land on the earth due to its strategic importance. Sir Olaf Caroe thought that the land was created for the people of Roh, but the people of the soil were not for the land, which means that whenever they got the opportunity they migrated from it and settled in another place. He also thought that the land was a rampart on the map of Asia, that the plateau of Iran is in its west and the heights of Trichmir and Chitral are in its north. There are passes in this rampart through which the invaders of Central Asia passed through to India making it a battlefield. History also tells us that invaders conquered India with the help and support of the brave people of the land of Roh and established kingdoms of their own there.

¹² Roholgy has been derived from two well-known fields of study: Sindhology and Egyptology.

¹³ As mentioned in chapter 1, this region is divided into different geographical configurations and areas, with Pakhtuns living on both sides of the Durand Line (see page 8).

The Intangible Heritage of the Pakhtuns at a Glance

Pakhtun culture is extremely rich. Whenever Pakhtun culture is discussed, it is of paramount importance to talk about *Pakhtunwali*, which is an intangible heritage of the people. We need encyclopaedic information and time of epic proportions in order to do justice to the intangible heritage of the Pakhtuns, which is why this chapter is just a brief overview.

Pakhtunwali is an unwritten constitution of sorts; all its codes are dependent on the nature and traditions of the Pakhtuns and are orally transmitted from generation to generation. One reason why *Pakhtunwali* has never been written is the significance of *lowz* (the word, promise or pledge given by one person to another), which is stronger than any written document.

Pakhtunwali, which incorporates and preserves all the norms, traditions and rituals of Pakhtun culture, is firmly rooted in Pashto language. As long as the Pashto language remained intact and in its original form, the spirit of Pakhtun culture was dynamic and alive. With the passing of time, frequent interactions with other cultures led to an invasion of alien concepts, rites and rituals, which tarnished the spirit of Pakhtun culture, which in turn had its influence on the Pashto language. Since Pashto and *Pakhtunwali* are inseparable, the latter lost the lustre it had.

The very changes to the Pashto language demonstrate that it is the most important heritage of the Pakhtun nation and so preserving this language is the a vital task for today's Pakhtuns. Any threat to this language is a potential threat to the Pakhtun nation. Pashto, *Pakhtunwali* and the Pakhtun nation are a trinity holding not only themselves together, but also distinguishing them

from other nations. The acquisition of another language for some other nation may merely mean a cultural change; however, for Pakhtuns it means the elimination of their nation.

The Pakhtun nation is really unique; it is tribal in nature and spirit where every tribe has its own identity. Pashto and *Pakhtunwali*, weave these tribes into one nation, because it they provide a common way of life. The accepted norm among all these tribes is the unconditional acceptance of and submission to this unwritten code of life by every individual, otherwise that person does not qualify as a Pakhtun. In fact, the worst offense for a Pakhtun is not to be included in the Pakhtun social system.

From the outside, *Pakhtunwali* seems to be a simple system; however it is an integrated and organized code with bears in upon all levels of life. For example, the *hujra*, which is an essential part of every good household, is not simply a guest house. It is an institution where the code of *Pakhtunwali* is imparted to youngsters. The *hujra* is an institution that gives unity to Pakhtuns who would otherwise distinguish themselves from one another by their home, street, village, *khel* (extended family), *tapa* (group), *sima* (area, locality), *nāma* (name) and tribe. The divisions allied to each of these geographic organic units lose their significance when members of different *khels* and *nāmās* sit together in a *hujra*. And what helps them stay united is their common code of ethics—*Pakhtunwali*.

Ever since the institution of the *hujra* lost its central role, the dissemination of *Pakhtunwali* has also diminished. An additional factor has been the exclusion of Pashto as a subject from curricula in schools and colleges. These factors have had their negative impact on the character of Pakhtuns. With this decline in the integrity of the Pakhtun character, culture also underwent a change for the worse. Furthermore, these changes befogged the concept and the institution of the *hujra*. If the intangible heritage of a nation is to be preserved, it is of the utmost importance that vital institutions, like the *hujra*, are revived. The *hujra* plays a pivotal role in the perpetuation of the Pakhtun nation.

Though the *hujra* is specifically for men, women have their own institution, *bandar*. The *bandar* is a gathering together of women from within a *tabar* (extended family) to decide household issues among themselves. Usually the women meet together in a home to engage in different chores, such as spinning and embroidery, or to discuss important issues pertaining to their household. In the past, they would keep vigil, sing songs, tell jokes, and not leave for their own houses until dawn.

Another important aspect of the intangible heritage of Pakhtuns is *ashar* or *balandra* (which is approximately equivalent to community work). People would get together and help with any work, such as construction or harvest. The help was given voluntarily (without wages)—something which would help everyone to finish their work in relatively less time and free of cost. Unfortunately, this wonderful practice is also dwindling away.

Another important social practice is *badraga*, which is providing an escort for guests until a point of safety or all the way to their house.

Pakhtunwali also has its own peculiar penal code. *Baramta* (security) is a practice among some Pakhtuns which allows them to pick up a culprit or a defaulter or any of his immediate relatives to ensure the delivery of goods or the return of money. This practice helps Pakhtuns prevent the occurrence of crimes.

One of the most important and oldest aspects of *Pakhtunwali* is *panā* or giving shelter to someone who seeks it. It is said that tradition of the Pakhtuns is one of the main reasons for the fall and destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban refused to abandon the most wanted person to the USA saying that it was against their traditions. Possibly one of the main reasons behind the unrest in South Waziristan is due to this very practice—that abandoning someone who asks you for *panā* or shelter is against *Pakhtunwali*. Perhaps this is the beginning of a clash of civilizations.

Tigah (truce) is a custom practised when there is a fight or battle between two tribes or families. *tigah* puts an immediate, but temporary, end

to the battle; both parties honour a rock, which is symbolically placed somewhere signifying the word that the two parties give each other with the help of a mediator.

jirga is yet another essential element of *Pakhtunwali*. The term and the concept is well known to everyone in the world as there was a 'Grand *jirga*' (*loya jirga*) of the elders of the Afghan tribe held in Germany after the fall of the Taliban.¹⁴ This council of the elders decides very important and critical issues. Respecting the *jirga's* decision is binding upon every Pakhtun.

Sheikh Mali, which is a system for the division of land among families, is also an important part of the intangible heritage of Pakhtuns. Sheikh Mali was a 15th century spiritual leader of the Yusufzai tribe, who, after migration from Afghanistan, evolved a code, called Daftar-e Sheikh Mali, for the division of lands in Swat, Mardan, Swabi, Ashna Ghar, etc. The British eliminated Daftar-e Sheikh Mali to protect their own interests.

Kamwali or excommunication is a custom practiced among Pakhtuns which allows a tribe to banish an individual or a family from the tribe if found guilty of violating the code of *Pakhtunwali*.

One of the interesting customs of *Pakhtunwali* is that of *katamir*, which is like the illumination of the Olympic torch. People would make a big fire on a mound, so those of distant areas could clearly see it, after the sighting of the crescent on the occasion of Eid ul Fitr.

These are only some of the salient features of the intangible heritage of Pakhtuns. There is a long list of domestic rituals and customs, such as the traditions associated with agriculture, festivals, folk games, manners, food, and fairs, some of which have disappeared or are in the process of disappearing. One of the main reasons why these beautiful elements of the intangible heritage of Pakhtuns are dying is the state of the Pashto language. There is hardly any who speaks or writes it correctly. This is not to say

¹⁴ Bonn, December 2001.

anything about following the code of Pashto.

It is of paramount importance that *Pakhtunwali* is kept alive. So long as this code of ethics is alive, the Pakhtun nation and character will thrive, otherwise they face an imminent threat of elimination. To make things worse, an organized movement seems to have been launched to ensure the extinction of Pashto.

A comprehensive code of life, domesticity, professions, music, dance, folklore and forms of the fine arts, which unfortunately have not been fully documented, also form essential elements of this intangible heritage.



Islam and Pashto

Pakhtuns have accepted Islam as their religion (*din*), but Pashto remains their code of life and they feel extremely committed to it. When religion and commitment (and or faith) join together, they construct a balanced way of life. This fusion of both makes spiritual and temporal values very strong. Pakhtuns adopted Islam as a universal divine law at a very early stage, and *Pakhtunwali* (Pashto code) has always been their code of life. Both Pashto and Islam have intermingled to the extent that now it is impossible to separate them. Islam offers comprehensive principles for individual and collective lives, while Pashto too, provides a decent base for spending life. Both are natural and perhaps this is why that they have become inseparable. Islam is considered a religion closely akin to human nature. The Pakhtuns have been living in a natural environment for centuries.

It seems that the Pakhtuns were not fully associated with any religion before entering into the fold of Islam and were managing their affairs in accordance with the principles of *Pakhtunwali*. One can find Zoroastrian influence in some of the Pakhtun rituals, customs and superstitions. But this might be the cultural impact of Zoroastrianism as this religion did reach the lands of the Pakhtuns. It is, however, curious to note that the general teachings of Zoroastrianism do not readily agree with *Pakhtunwali* and therefore, the partial influence may very well be because of the mutual interaction of people.

Another major religion, Buddhism, also came to the land of the Pakhtuns. Gandhara is a Pakhtun land. Buddhism had been a dominant religion of the Gandhara region. This is why one can find Buddhist influence in some customs, rituals, and dress code of the Pakhtuns. But this is not one-sided: Buddhism was also influenced by Pashto. Apparently, however, Buddhist teachings are not in consonance with the Pakhtun mind and psyche. Ancient Aryan influence too can be traced in *Pakhtunwali*. One can easily notice Aryan cultural traces in Pakhtun traditions. *Pakhtunwali* possesses an

independent cultural edifice and the religious influence of the Aryans can be attributed to their social association with them.

In the modern era of the Pakhtuns, the Christian impact is very obvious, particularly in social areas, such as costume and dining etiquette. This is because of the cultural invasion of the Christian-rooted Western civilization, more so because of the political and educational systems, although Christianity was introduced here at a very late stage during the British colonial era. Evangelists did their utmost, but they could not convert any Pakhtun except a few socially-deprived individuals. Christian missions are actively engaged in their activities, but they cannot make any headway.

In this continuation, the deep Judaic impact on most of the customs and names of the Pakhtuns cannot be overlooked. Those historians who consider the Pakhtuns remnants of Bani Israel are of the view that Pakhtuns followed the Jewish religion before converting to Islam. Their colour, physique, code and way of life greatly resemble that of the Jews which substantiates this view, and it has also been claimed that Pakhtuns were the lost Israelite tribe of Assyria. The remnants of this lost tribe might have influenced Pakhtun customs and traditions, for Judaism had given birth to a very strong culture before the rise of Islam. With the advent of Islam in this part of the world, the influence of other religions withered away to a great extent.

Islamic teachings are very close to Pakhtun nature, in particular the concept of *badal* (revenge) which is a natural urge of the human psyche and is deeply rooted in man's soul. However, the Pakhtun *badal* is harder than the Islamic concept of *qisās* (blood for blood). There are other similar values in both Pashto and Islam.

The *jirga* is a very old Pakhtun tradition. Pakhtuns by nature are democratic and a freedom-loving people. It appears that it was through the *jirga* system that they collectively entered into the fold of Islam. Although *Pakhtunwali* did offer principles for ordinary life, it was devoid of any integrated spiritual aspects, a very important urge of human nature. Strong

bonds of relationship are of great significance in Pashto, which are only possible through a spiritual and divine code of the conduct of Islam. On becoming Muslims they saw Islam as a true reflection of *Pakhtunwali*. In areas where both could not agree, they, at times, followed the Islamic code while on other occasions they adopted *Pakhtunwali*. This attitude gave birth to a unique Pakhtun-Islamic civilization.

The concept of *kor* (household, family) is as old as the Pakhtuns themselves. The *hujra* too is a very old Pakhtun cultural symbol. With Islam, *joomāt* (mosque) was added to this already existing social edifice. *kor*, *hujra* and *joomāt* now form the basic institutions of the Pakhtun way of life. *kor* is the basic unit of *kəlay* (village) and is the greatest symbol of Pakhtun honour. This explains why Pakhtuns are ready to give any sacrifice in protecting guests who seek asylum with them.

The *hujra* is not only the place for sharing events of joy and grief, but is also the venue for consultation and holding *jirgas*. *joomāt* also provides a venue for those customs and rituals which have spiritual dimensions.

kor, *kəlay*, *hujra* and *joomāt* (mosque) together make the institutional setup which provides infrastructure to the body of Pakhtun life. Their balance is a guarantee of a balanced Pakhtun life. Transgression of this delicate fabric gives birth to feuds and conflicts. Violation of the laws of the Pashto code leads to chaos and restlessness. The violation of others' borders either in the *hujra* or the *joomāt* damages authority which results in loss of 'balance' in relationships and results in conflict.

Like *Pakhtunwali*, Islam too is a system of honour and dignity for Pakhtuns and they do not hesitate to stand-up to safeguard their religion in a healthy and positive manner.

A clash between Pashto and *Sharia* (Islamic Law) in Pakhtun society has occurred, where one transgressed the border of the another. The Bareilvi movement failed in the Pakhtun areas because those associated with the mosque interfered with issues concerned purely with the Pakhtun code. The

Pakhtuns rose against them and drove them away.

In the recent past some analysts are of the opinion that the same mistake was repeated by the Taliban. Pakhtuns, no doubt, have great respect for *Sharia*, but within the parameters of *Pakhtunwali*. When the Taliban violated these parameters and tried to completely do away with *Pakhtunwali*, they were faced with tremendous resistance by the Pakhtuns which ultimately resulted in their downfall.

The maintenance of the delicate fabric of the *hujra* and *joomāt* invigorates the balance of Pakhtun social order. This has led Allama Iqbal to consider Pakhtuns as the protectors of Islam. Khushal Baba also refers to the maintenance of this social fabric and says that everyone should limit himself to the work assigned to him.



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Pashto Music

The Pakhtuns are a unique nation with distinctive aesthetic tastes. Pakhtuns are a romantic people with a deep love of music, but they don't like musicians. On the surface, this appears to be a very strange dichotomy, but there are very good reasons for it.

Musicians typically belong to a lower cast of society and adopt music as their profession and livelihood. Pakhtuns, however, are a tough warrior people and admire more manly professions such as soldiery and agriculture. In addition, the soft and delicate nature of the music profession may cause it to be considered among a job for women. Therefore, to be a musician who earns a living earning through music is thought to be against the Pakhtun character.

Down through the ages, however, Pakhtuns have promoted music indirectly by lavishly spending on it sums that may be considered by other cultures as far too much for a musical performance. This generosity encouraged the development of Pashto music, with its rich traditions. These traditions have been passed from generation to generation not by systematic notation or records, but orally, through both singing and the sounds (melodies) of instruments. A few musical scores, and even whole symphonies, have survived, but the majority of Pakhtun music was created and is being passed on without ever being written down.

It should also be noted, that with the advent of radio, mullahs sternly opposed public demonstrations of music, but nevertheless it would accompany many traditional Pakhto ceremonies.

Professional musicians aside, even the toughest Pakhtun would practise

music in his *hujra* and would love to play the *rabāb*¹⁵ or *sitār*¹⁶ accompanied by the beating of *mangay* (water pot) as a drum. He would enjoy singing folk songs, but not in a professional capacity. In such ways Pashto music played a role in the long history and tradition of the region.

Traditional Pashto music has its own unique genre and terms. However, professional musicians use classical Indian musical terminology. The use of Indian terminology is common because the rich musical traditions of India have influenced Pashto music due to the interwoven histories of both cultures. Professional musicians traditionally used to come from the subcontinent of India.

Through the Pakhtuns' own original music there is a rich history woven into the folklore of the region. Many of the *andantes* have been taken from Indian *ragas*¹⁷ (literally, 'colour' or 'mood') and used for harmonizing Pashto tunes. From the many *ragas* only the *Bhairvan raga* is popular among the Pakhtuns because its 'evergreen' melodious composition is considered to be suitable for all seasons, times and geographical conditions. The *Bhairvan raga* was originally adopted for the composition of the Pashto *tappa*, an evergreen and most popular folk genre of Pashto folk poetry. Subsequently all Pashto songs were based on this unique genre.

tappa:

The *tappa* is the oldest genre of Pashto poetry and is the most popular musical form of Pakhtuns of all ages and sexes. It is commonly sung by

¹⁵ The *rabāb* is lute-shaped, stringed instrument with tuning pegs made of mulberry (*tut*) wood, a goatskin face, three plucked gut strings, gut frets, two or three 'drone' strings and ten to fourteen other steel strings that vibrate sympathetically when the main strings are plucked, together producing a deep resonant sound.

¹⁶ The *sitār* is a plucked stringed instrument with a long hollow neck and a gourd-shaped resonating chamber. Sympathetic strings add to the resonance. Local *sitārs* are a very simple variation with only three strings.

¹⁷ In Indian classical music, the *raga* refers to a series of five or more musical notes upon which a melody is made.

Pakhtun schoolboys, by the elders in their *hujras* and by women in their homes and *godars*. It is the only song sung both in times of grief and on the occasion of marriage. *tappas* were traditionally sung without musical instruments, but musicians have gradually composed different accompaniments for them. When the *tappa* is sung, rather than recited, it is often to the accompaniment of traditional Pashto musical instruments, the *rabāb* and the *mangay*. However, nowadays, they are sung with a full orchestral accompaniment. *tappas* have up to sixteen different modes of harmony. To this day, in mountains and deserts, *tappas* are sung unaccompanied or to just the melody of a flute.

Among the different melodies that accompany sung *tappas*, the distinctive tunes of Tirah, Peshawar, Bannu and Qandahar are particularly popular. Great excitement recently greeted the creation of a new *tappa* by the famous Pashto singer, Haroon Badshah, which wove Indian notation, with its own Pashto andante into a haunting new *tappa* Mughalai.

Chārbeta:

The *chārbeta* is another popular folklore genre, which stems from the rhythms of the *tappa*. A *chārbeta* is an epic poem with a particular rhythm. There are different kinds of *chārbetas*:

- Those which relates to heroic deeds and heroism
- Those which express romantic feelings
- Those with a very fast tempo, sung by two or more singers, but not as a chorus. In this form the main singer is supported by a second singer who repeats the first line only.

The music and singing of *chārbetas* used to be called *tang takor*. (However, the term *tang takor* has come to be used to describe a musical concert in Pashto.) Traditionally a *chārbeta* was begun just after the finishing of a *tappa*. Two or three *chārbetās* have been notated in the *raga* Bhairvan and are therefore recorded in writing.

Nimakāy:

This is another popular form of folk song. It has a unique structure and is normally composed by women. In its simplest form it has one-and-a-half lines, but a more extended form sometimes has two or three lines. The first lines are repeated in the middle of the song. A Pashto *tappa* can be added according to the subject and circumstances. This form represents a genuine Pashto song type. There are *nimakāy* which can be sung without the addition of a *tappa*, because some forms of it already have two and half lines of poetry within it. Most of these songs in Pakhtun culture are used as a means of describing a locality or as a format for romantic topics. The song subjects tend to dwell on love affairs and daily life. Some of the *nimakāys* have been notated in different Indian *ragas*.

Loba:

The *loba* is another popular genre of Pashto folk songs, particularly among ordinary people. Sometimes *lobas* are combined with *tappas*, but as the subject of the genre is often play, so the form of this song is sung repeatedly in chorus and the two sides of singers reply to each other. Some *lobas* have a dramatic structure and poetic dialogues are woven into them. Commonly, all folk songs are called *lobas*. A *loba*, in structure, is very similar to a *nimakāy*, although both are essentially different song forms.

Badala:

A *badala* is also a popular folk genre, sung only by professional singers. A *badala* is like an epic poem, sung with set musical tempos and structure. It is accompanied by the *rabāb*, harmonium,¹⁸ drums and *tabla*. In a *badala*, an ancient story is narrated, based on fiction and mythology. Heroic epics, tragedies and comic stories are expressed in this folk form of classical

¹⁸ The harmonium is a hand-pumped, keyboard instrument. The musician plays the keys with one hand and bumps the bellows with his other hand. The resulting sound is similar to that of an accordion.

mathnavi.¹⁹ *badala* means 'variation' because each couplet is varied in rhythm from the others. It is sung traditionally at midnight, which is considered the most suitable time for its music and enjoyment. Almost all Pashto romances have been narrated in this form of poetry.

Rubay:

rubay is the famous name for a type of Pashto *ghazal*, or verse. It is different from the classical genre of the *rubay*. Rather, it is a *ghazal*, verse or poem, set within a particular musical form. The *rubays* of Rahman Baba²⁰ are popular among many Pakhtuns. *rubays* are sung, in a concert, before a *badala* or any other form of folk song. Each song has a folk name, although any verse, or *ghazal*, with a twelve-syllable meter, can be sung as a *rubay*.

Ghazal:

The *ghazal* is the classical genre of poetry; popularized by musicians. It came very late in to the repertoire of Pashto music and so only the educated classes of Pakhtuns like it, in particular those who are familiar with Urdu or Hindi *ghazals* and have developed a taste for them. The man in the street is less fond of this form because of its slow music and rhythm.

Traditional Pashto music:

It is the tradition of Pashto musical concerts that first of all the orchestra play a symphony called a *sāz*. This is an instrumental piece that is played before the singing begins. Different *sāzes* are played for different occasions. For example, the *sāz* of *shan* is played with a full orchestra which consists of the following, musical instruments.

dhol (long drum)

tabla (two small drums)

rabāb (traditional stringed instrument)

sitār (local three stringed instrument)

bajā (harmonium)

sarinda (fiddle)

surna (pipe)

shpelay (flute)

It is also possible to combine modern instruments with traditional ones.

The traditional instruments are often divided into two types:

- Instruments of *sur* or tone which include the *rabāb*, fiddle, pipe, clarinet, flute, etc.
- Instruments for *tāl* or beating time that include the *dhol*, *naqan*, *tamble*, *mangay* and some copper pots, etc.

The instruments of *sur* and *tāl* are used in combination to make the orchestra for traditional Pashto music.

The Famous Symphony, Shan:

Shan is the beautiful musical symphony that starts many concerts, and it is sometimes accompanied by dancing. It is essentially a type of dancing symphony. It is the *sāz*, or song that was traditionally played by a victorious force entering into a captured village. It is played as a symbol of a happy occasion.

Sahni:

After *shan* the other melodious symphony is the *sahni*. It is said to be the original Pashto *sāz* and has different kinds of tunes and melodies. Without it no concert of Pashto music can be complete; in fact, only when the *sahni* is played does a concert really begin. The *sahnis* of Tirah and Peshawar are the most famous and popular of all. These musical forms have also been notated and written down. The *sahni* is used for singing *qawālīs* and also as the music for a particular form of traditional dance.

¹⁹ The *mathnavi* is an extensive poem of about 25,000 verses (in six books) written in Persian by the Persian Sufi poet Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi from 1258 until his death in 1273. It is spiritual in content, teaching Sufis how to reach their goal of union with God.

²⁰ Abdur Rahman Baba (1653-1711), a legendary Afghan (Pakhtun) Sufi poet.

Khattak Dance:

For the famous Khattak dance a special type of music is played called the *Pakhtunkhwa*. The main instrument for it is the pipe clarion. Large drums are beaten with sticks as the dancers move to the changing pace of rhythms and tempos. The three main forms of the Khattak dance are the *balbala*, *shahdola* and *bangrah*.

- The *balbala* is danced by men only, in the open
- The *shahdola* is danced by the women only in the privacy of the home
- The *bangrah* is danced by both the sexes.

The original Khattak dance was performed with swords and music. Many of these dances have now been notated and recorded for posterity.

Logaray:

The *logaray* is a form of Pashto symphony, which is played with a full orchestra. Traditional Pashto dances are often performed to the various tunes of the *logaray*, danced by either a single dancer or a larger troupe.

Atan:

The *atan* is a tribal dance, and each tribe will have its own dance form that reflects its own culture and locality. The music for this dance, as well as its steps, varies in composition for different areas and tribes.

The Role of the Mother Tongue

Whether others realize the importance of the role of mother tongue in connection with importing education or not, we are acutely conscious of this fact. So far, there has been no sign in our social life of even very basic education being given in the mother tongue. The result is that we, as a preponderant linguistic entity, have failed to comprehend the impact being made on our language and culture by other alien languages and the education being imported through them.

There may be many psychological factors involved here and many forces of nature at work, which account for our lagging behind in the field of development in general and in the field of education in particular. However, I think the basic reason for this state of affairs is the utter lack of education in our mother tongue. It can be easily divined that if we had imported basic education in none other than our very own mother tongue we would have made enormous strides in all fields of enquiry.

From early childhood to school-going age, in homes, *hujras* and mosques, we learn and use our mother tongue, but when we step into school we are suddenly confronted by strange alien tongues. The child feels as if he has stepped on to the planet Mars in his own street. He is at a complete loss to understand whether the knowledge and skills that are preached in an outlandish lingo are actually as important as the medium itself. In his confused and unsuccessful attempt to master the medium, the vital importance of knowledge and skills that ought to have been learnt easily and quickly are really relegated to a secondary position. The result is that the child utterly fails to either grasp the alien language fully or absorb the knowledge that is being imported through it. Like the proverbial washer-man's dog, he belongs to neither home nor washing site.

Our Pashto mother tongue embodies the essence of importing the knowledge of our culture, one of the many cultures of this world, to each other, to the younger generation, and to the outside world. However, modern knowledge is not being transmitted through it because the language has not been provided with the necessary means of transmission and self perpetuation. It was not allowed to play its rightful role of being also the language of modern learning. It was never afforded sufficient opportunities to prove itself as a viable alternative to the powerful neighbouring languages which enjoy the perennial patronage and active attention of some scholars.

Khushal Khan Khattak lamented this fact three hundred years ago when he looked at the Pashto language:

"Nobody lifted her veil.

Pashto is still a virgin."

Khushal Baba has practically proved that if Pashto had been taken proper care of and given its due place, there could be no better medium of instruction for any kind of education. His testimony to the books on medicine and jurisprudence alone will bear witness to this fact. We might overlook the anthropological value of his book *Swat Nama* (about Swat), but his other book, *Dastar Nama* (Statecraft), can be proudly compared to Machiavelli's *Orinoco*, in pointing out the essentials of governance to the Pakhtun nation in Pashto. In Pashto literature we have such inspirational and creative works that if somebody wanted to see the perfect embodiment of sublime desires, he could turn to Kazim Khan Shaida's *diwān* (collection of poetry). It was not a mere cry in the wilderness when the father of *ghazal* Amir Hamza Khan Shīnwari scathingly declared:

"The adversary calls it the language of hell;

To heaven I shall go with Pashto."

Bayazid Ansari used to have spiritual revelations in Pashto. In fact

every Sufi receives their inspiration in his mother tongue. If the mother tongue alone is the vehicle of such intricate esoteric experiences then why should it not be employed for such eclectic activities as imparting basic education? If one thinks and dreams in his mother tongue, and if only the letters and words of one's mother tongue can interpret the symbolism of each person's subconscious, then why should it be denied the role of one's mental evolution. In this connection there are many such questions which beg answers. No matter what political expediency, nor the designation of Pashto as "the language of hell" and attempts to try to throw it into the abyss of oblivion; these machinations would essentially be un-Islamic. In this way a staunch *Mosalmān*, the Pakhtun, would be rendered not only speechless but unimportant.

But nowadays the eyes of the world seem to have turned to the Muslim Pakhtun and the powerful voice of the Pashto language. It has been easy for the Pakhtun to write his history in blood. We would like him to write it in the Pashto language at the same time.

In the same way that no alien imperialism has successfully thrust itself on the essentially free spirit of Pakistan, the Pashto language also needs to be liberated from modern day linguistic imperialism. Like that on the battlefield the password here should also been *jihād*.



Promoting Linguistic Diversity:

Building Linguistic Bridges

Language is one of the most effective tools for the reflection of a culture, and to uphold its true picture. That is perhaps why, in addition to ethnicity, language is a means to the identity of nationality. It is redundant to say that all extant nationalities and ethnicities have their own mother tongues, which is the basic medium for the cultural education of that particular nationality or ethnicity. Whether part of the process of evolution or by some divine miracle, language is an essential part of the collective wisdom of its speakers. It treasures their folk tales and sagas, the nuances of their customs and traditions, the subtlety of their cultural gestures and ways of life. This is why a culture is intact so long as its language is alive.

Nature has perhaps given language to every ethnicity and nationality so that each ethnic grouping not only lives with its own identity, but at the same time also communicates and interacts with others thus giving birth to a common civilization. This would not have been possible without linguistic diversity. For an essential human balance on the planet earth, it is of paramount importance that all diverse ethnicities and languages exist in their own topical spaces so that the natural premise for identity is there. In addition, respect for these natural premises, in a way, also provides us with an opportunity to have peace and fraternity on a much greater level. Without positive assimilation, there will be a sort of chaos in every area.

Perhaps it is compatible with the laws of nature that all humans live without allowing their identity to absolutely blend in with the identities of others. The division of humans into tribes and ethnicities is perhaps precisely due to this very reason. However, that does not mean that the identity of one

ethnicity should be at the cost of the elimination of another. Mutual respect for and understanding of the cultural identity of others is as important as the preservation and promotion of one's own identity and language. Potentially we promote and preserve own identity and language if we allow the identity and language of others the same prerogative.

With the advent of globalization, cultural changes are bound to occur as opportunities to interact with others have grown exponentially. Though the process of globalization is a harbinger of development, it has also caused a commotion in the otherwise calm sphere of cultural stability and clearly defined identities. We can perhaps define "commotion" as types of identity and cultural crises that are conceivably more horrific than some of the development that globalization has brought about. This is why it is essential that in this age of globalization, where a new culture is bound to emerge, we have to ensure the preservation of the identities of each ethnicity and nationality as well. True diversity only exists when each social and national group can stand on its own plus contribute to the whole nation.

Let me here refute a fallacious impression that is creating a buzz among some circles: that globalization is some sort of a cultural monster that will essentially swallow all smaller cultural identities. Globalization is a celebration of diversity. Our part is to be fully aware of, and partner in, the newly emerging identities and cultures that globalization ushers in, without allowing our own culture to dissolve and disappear.

International bodies can play an extremely important role in dissipating such fears that some people might have about their language and culture. If languages are an essential component of natural diversity and beauty, Pakistan in general, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular is, a museum for some of the most beautiful languages alive today.

The Pashto language, for example, is not just a medium of communication for Pakhtuns; it is also a symbol of their code of conduct and ethics. It treasures what the Pakhtuns call their *Pakhtunwali*. This is why for

Pakhtuns, the preservation of their language is, in fact, in the literal sense of the word, the preservation of their culture. This means that, in certain cases, the extinction of a language is somehow an extinction of a nationality or ethnicity. This does not mean that other sister languages of Pashto are in any way less significant. Each one in itself has its own charm and beauty, and upholds the cultural nuances of its speakers. However, it is neither desirable nor healthy that a pride in language, be it for Pakhtuns or any other nation or ethnicity, should be at the cost of other languages. Such an attitude breeds otherness, and subsequently leads to antagonism and hostility, and such a lack of tolerance for different languages and cultures can badly affect the peace and stability of a society as well. We don't have to go into details about how something like this has happened in the brief history of our country. I personally believe that that was the consequence of lack of linguistic diversity.

In the present age of globalization, different social and ethnic units are bound to come closer together. Slowly and gradually, the geographical and psychological distances that existed between different nations and ethnicities are diminishing. In such a situation, linguistic diversity becomes the need and the call of the day. It is our first step towards a durable and peaceful co-existence based on mutual respect. Understanding another language and making conscious efforts to learn how to speak it opens up a window into the cultural treasures and psyche of the people of that language. We need to open as many gates, not just windows, as we possibly can. Our learning of the language of the other is making a statement of sorts telling the other that we care; and we do.

My conviction is that we have reached a time in history in which we not only respect the language of others; we should also promote them by opening up language centres in universities. Equally important is the preservation of the mother tongue of a people without which we will not achieve the peace and understanding that I mentioned earlier. However, respect for the language of others to a point of overlooking one's own is an unforgivable betrayal, and I would be the last one to be guilty of such an act.

It is high time that we intellectuals do something practically about promoting linguistic diversity. The idea of preserving a Tangible Heritage of a people is of paramount importance, but doing that successfully is possible only when the Intangible Heritage—such as languages—are also promoted and preserved. The two are inseparable: cultural diversity is not possible without linguistic diversity. If we mean business, and are serious about the preservation of cultures, we must do something about the languages and literatures of those cultures.

In addition, there is a bigger need for more frequent interaction among different ethnicities and nations within and without the country. Doing so will open up an avenue which will afford a bigger and more durable understanding which our world needs more today than it ever did before. Instead of thinking of building walls around ourselves; we should connect with the other, and languages can help us achieve that.



Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak: A Pakhtun Contemporary of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai

The mighty Indus is called "Abasin" in Pashto, which means 'the father of rivers'. Many rivers contribute to the flow of this 'father of rivers' on its long voyage to the Sindh and the sea beyond, including various tributaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—the land of the Pakhtuns. No river, mountain, desert or arid plain has been described so much in Pashto folklore as Abasin. Thus, the Abasin has become a symbol of Pakhtun love, expressed in tragedy as well as romance.

The Abasin and Pakhtun culture have a very strong common bond. The great Gandhara culture had its birth on its banks and there achieved glory. The Aryans started agriculture on its shores. The confluence of the Kabul River with the Abasin takes place at Attock, and the description of Attock without mention of the Khattaks is incomplete. On the right bank of the Abasin at Attock, at the confluence of the Kabul and Indus rivers, the Khattak Abad tribe is situated. Due to an unfortunate incident, the Pakhtun Khattaks did not continue their onward journey on the banks of the river Indus, but even so, the Khattak tribe became part of a golden era of history, in an area stretching from from Khost to the mountains of Shawal and up to the banks of the Indus.

The great Pashto poet Khushal Khan Khattak beautifully portrayed his love and deep-rooted attachment for the Abasin when, during his revolt

against the Mughal King Aurangzeb,²¹ he took refuge in the hills of Cherat. From there he could lift his eyes and see the majestic Indus; he expressed his emotional attachment to it when he said in one of his verses,

"I am fully contented and grateful to my Lord for blessing me
with the opportunity to see Abasin from my village Mir Kalan."²²

The Abasin is an apt metaphor for the diverse cultures and civilizations that line its banks. Just as the waters from many streams and tributaries flow between the banks of this 'father of rivers' and contribute to it, in the same way diverse peoples and traditions have contributed their local cultures, folklore and romance to all that is Pakhtun. Though each stream is unique, none exists, nor has survived, in total isolation; each has, in varying degrees, refreshed and watered others; and all who live (as it were) on the banks of this river of culture and history, have drawn from the ever-changing stream, sharing ideas and poetic images.

So it is that in its long voyage from the North West to the South East, the Abasin gave birth to various beautiful civilizations. From these civilizations in the 17th Century emerged celebrated names in Islamic Sufi thought. These include the great Sindhi poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, whose poetry seems to have been composed in harmony with the music of the rippling waters of the River Indus, as well as other poets like Khushal Khan Khattak, Abdur Rahman Baba and Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak. It is a strange and wondrous coincidence that the currents of Sufism that were in vogue during this century coursed through the mystic poetry of the Peshawar valley, as well as in the poetry of the lands up and downstream. It seems as if Abasin had fostered a spiritual affinity between the Sindh and the Frontier; for during this century the poets and mystics of Pashto and of Sindhi touched the zenith of fame. As Allama Iqbal said,

²¹ Shahanshah Aurangzeb Alamgir I (1618–1707), the 6th Mughal Emperor.

²² Mir Kalan is a village on the hills of Cherat.

"Nature's objectives are looked after either by an inhabitant of a desert or a mountain".

In this article I would like to explore the spiritual links between a man of the desert and a man of the mountains by travelling to one point on our shared river; a place near the confluence of the Kabul River with Abasin. We exit its banks at the town of Attock, near a valley named by Mughal historians as Wadi-e-Nilab (or the Nilab Valley), and press on to the mountainous home of the Khattak Abad tribe of Pakhtuns. There I want to briefly explore the thoughts of a Pakhtun contemporary of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, the Pakhtun mystic poet Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak. As Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai has engendered life into the barren deserts of Sindh with his songs, so the romantic and mystic poems of Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak are like flowers among the rocks and mountains in the land of the Pakhtuns. As a full comparison of their thought is beyond the scope of this article, I will restrict myself to introducing the person and work of this contemporary mystic of Abdul Latif, Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak.

Biographical Background

Abdul Qadir Khan Khattak was the son of the great warrior-poet Khushal Khan Khattak. He was born in the latter half of the seventeenth century at Akora Khattak, district Nowshera. In the days of his youth he played an important role in his father's movement against the Mughals. He was educated by Khushal Khan Khattak. He also profited from the mysticism of his uncle, Faqir Jamil Baig. In addition, the patron saint or *pir* of this family was Hazrat Kaka Sahib Reham Kar. It was from Hazrat Kaka Sahib Reham Kar that his disciple, Khushal Khan Khattak, learned the language and concepts of mysticism. Thus in the poetry of Khushal Khan some mild influence of Kaka Sahib can be discerned. Similarly, in the mystic thoughts of his son, Abdul Qadir, the influence of Khushal Khan seems predominant.

In his youth Abdul Qadir fought alongside his father Khushal in various battles. Khushal Khan was so inspired by his son's bravery that he mentioned

it in poetry and prose in many of his works. To participate in these battles was not only a requirement of Pakhtun honour and prestige or *Pakhtunwali*; it was a family tradition as well. After his father's death, Abdul Qadir turned towards practical philosophy and busied himself in writing. He acquired a profound knowledge of the existing branches of learning. He wrote in Pashto because it was his mother tongue, and he remained devoted to it because of his patriotic association with the Pashto literary movement pioneered by his father. However, he was also fluent in Arabic and Persian.

For these men, Pashto was a symbol of Pakhtun identity and an assertion of pride against the Mughal and Persian-language hegemony. Yet Abdul Qadir was not a parochial figure. Rather he was a man of intellectual and linguistic depth, displaying a great command of the Persian and Arabic languages in addition to Pashto. His Pashto translations of Maulana Hali's "Yusuf Zulaikha" and Saadi Sherafi's "Gulistan" are regarded as the best of their kind and clearly reveal his expertise in Arabic and Persian. However, even then he preferred to write in Pashto, because he favoured his Pakhtun identity over everything else.

Aspects of the Poetry of Abdul Qadir Khan

Some critics of Pashto literature say that Abdul Qadir Khan was a great scholar, artist and poet of his age who unluckily was born between the two stars of Pashto literature, namely Khushal Khan Khattak and Abdur Rahman Baba. Thus, Abdul Qadir's fame was eclipsed by the other two giants, and he never received the recognition he deserved. Others suggest that Abdul Qadir is an overly metaphysical and passionate poet, and only intellectuals can fully understand and benefit from his poetry. That is why he was so popular among intellectuals. Whatever the reason, Abdul Qadir Khan never attained the degree of popularity among the people as did Rahman Baba and Khushal Khan Khattak.

If the collection of Abdul Qadir is studied critically, one would find that his scholastic thought coupled with a romantic bent make him a great

philosophical poet. As a poet, he developed his own distinctive style. In scholastic thought it is very difficult to infuse new meaning into words and thought according to the strict discipline of a subject. But Abdul Qadir developed novel ideas and expressions which have no comparison in Pashto literature, opening new dimensions to the familiar images of mysticism. For example, he says,

"Whether it is voice or vision, both are the food of the soul

But those indulging in sensuous pleasures should have no concern with it".

This 'voice' (*āwāz*) represents not only the spoken word, but the melodious word, that which is sung. And the 'vision' (*dedan*) of which he writes is the 'beatific vision', the glorious face to face 'meeting' or 'reunion' with the Beloved which every mystic seeks. For Abdul Qadir, the melody of language and the melody of life both provide nourishment to the soul which those who feed their souls with worldly pursuits can never know. They cannot hear or understand the voice, and are blind to the vision and true meaning of beauty.

Writing about the dance of mystics, Abdul Qadir says,

"It is God's decree to spend wealth and cast away this world."

This, he says, is beautifully portrayed by a Sufi's dance. When a mystic throws out his hands in an ecstatic dance, he symbolically casts away and renounces the world and all its treasures. It may be that Abdul Qadir developed this mystical knowledge from his great father. The value he placed on the quality of living and thinking of mendicants (saintly persons or *darwaysh*) could also be the result of the company of his uncle, Faqir Jamil Khan, who had cast away the treasures and pleasures of his Nawabdom and Khandom for the simple life of a mendicant (*darwaysh*).

Of the oneness of God or the Ultimate Reality, Abdul Qadir wrote,

"My beloved appears before me mirrored in everything,
Sometimes in white celestial colours and sometimes in mysterious dark.
Sometimes my beloved entangles my heart in her silken tresses,
And sometimes she appears in the form of a light blinking in her eyes, on her
forehead, and her cheeks,

Attracting a moth who is madly in love with the light;
And sometimes she appears to nightingales in a dog-flower."²³

The poet exhorts himself to see a glimpse of his beloved in all forms and things as long as there is no doubt in his devotion and he is sincere to her. According to Abdul Qadir, beauty is the manifestation of the Ultimate Reality. In this materialistic world whatever beauty is seen, in whatever form, this is just the reflection of that Ultimate Truth. To the Sufi, each and every object is a mirror in which he sees the face of his Beloved. In each mirror, he sees one and only one face, and in that mirror, the Beloved shows himself.

Abdul Qadir considers physical reality to be a reflection of the Absolute Reality. He says those who see a difference between the two are mistaken. But those who have the piercing sight of true insight can see beneath the surface of things. They can perceive Absolute Reality in its various physical forms. He says about Absolute Reality,

"Beauty can be seen in all forms by those whose hearts have been
illuminated by love."

In a sense, Abdul Qadir, is saying, "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder." Only those that have the aesthetic sense and the vision of a mystic can appreciate beauty. He believes that it is not orderliness or physical features that make a thing beautiful. Rather, it is its overall effect on the beholder that makes it beautiful. As he puts it,

²³ *gul-e nasreen*, the dog flower.

"Beauty is a feeling
Engendered by a thing
Not necessarily orderly
Proportionate and eye catching".

Abdul Qadir says real aesthetic experience is very difficult to put into fitting words. Aesthetic experience is a feeling which cannot be fully expressed. That is why he says to his beloved,

"As it is impossible to take an antidote out of a snake's mouth, similarly it is my unexpressed poetic feeling which is entangled in your silken tresses, writhing in agony to find expression in befitting words".

Abdul Qadir exercised strict ascetic discipline and self-control, repudiating all forms of sensual pleasures all his life. As he once said,

"Jesus Christ broke the bondage of physical-self; he flew up to the heavens on the wings of abstinence and piety."

Abdul Qadir had repudiated this world because he believed it was a hurdle in the way of his goals. In this connection he wrote,

"When Ultimate Truth beckons,
this world starts to appear as
a mirage.
My own sensual desire
started to block my ways
to achieving my real objective
that of reaching the Ultimate Truth.
That was why I abandoned
my own sensuous desires".

About the oneness of God or the Ultimate Truth he says,

"As long as a drop lives by itself, all alone, conceited by a sense of selfhood, it has no significance and is self-deluding; but when it becomes one with an ocean it reaches its real destination and achieves fulfilment."

It is indeed very regretful to say that Abdul Qadir's poetry and philosophy, which is a precious collection, was not accorded its deserved recognition by people. Suffice it to say, using his own words,

"If those stricken by the barren autumn say that there is no refreshing dawn, they should ask the reality from the newly-blossomed flower.
How can the visionaries believe the blind saying that there is no light?"



The Prospect and Perception of Peace in Pakhtun Culture

The world has never been more in need of peace at any stage of its history than today. One reason is quite clear: almost every country of the world has a sufficient cache of deadly weapons due to advanced nuclear and war technology. The world could be wiped out and become extinct in a flash. Therefore, it is intensely needed that the conflicts between countries and cultures should be resolved through dialogue.

There is a new emerging perspective of the world, the psyche of world peace. Fortunately, in accordance with the concept of globalization, some individuals and organizations have worked to promote the cause of a 'peace culture' in the global village and so minimise the possibility of war. This has also paved the way for adopting dialogue as a means of conflict resolution.

Peace always guarantees advancement, prosperity and the betterment of the people. It can be manifested in all shapes of beauty, including towering high-rise buildings, historical monuments and magnificent seats of learning. On the other hand, wherever we see the devastating signs of destruction, they bespeak volumes about the evils of war and barbarism.

This bizarre situation has forced people belonging to all the cultures of the world to bring peace to their respective societies by enacting their cultural values and golden traditions. Peace efforts move on from the local frame to the international level involving the whole of humanity in order to bring back peace and unity in diversity. We have lots of religious social norms and ethics which advocate peace, mutual respect, unity and humanism. The culture of Pakhtuns has a teaching of peace if properly understood.

Pakhtuns enjoy this ancient and very strong culture of *Pakhtunwali*, the habits, rituals, customs, traditions and the rules and regulations which govern typical Pakhtun patterns of life. This code of conduct of Pakhtuns illuminates the inner and outer life of Pakhtuns, and their values down the centuries. This code of conduct also shapes the individual and collective psyche of Pakhtuns.

The term "*Pakhtunwali*" is synonymous with Pakhtun culture in all its different dimensions (cf. *An Introduction to Pashtun Culture*.) All the social norms, values, traditions and practices fall under this one comprehensive system, which has given a special character to the Pakhtun race.

Pakhtunwali is an unwritten code controlling, guiding and balancing to a large extent, the form, character and discipline of the Pakhtun way of life. It is the name of the traditional customary law, which has been adopted by Pakhtuns from time immemorial. It is framed on the principle of equity and is deeply ingrained in the social fabric of a Pakhtun's life and is highly esteemed and held sacrosanct by all persons irrespective of their financial or social status. The more one adheres to its manifesto, the greater esteem he enjoys in his brotherhood and community. It embodies in itself all the customs, and traditions, heritage, customary law, usage and all social relations. It is a concept conveying the meanings of the tribal socio-economic, political and cultural system in totality—courage, hospitality, kinship, loyalty, love for friends, chastity, morality and respecting other people's rights, are all components of *Pakhtunwali*. This code requires of every Pakhtun to defend his motherland, to grant asylum to destitute irrespective of their creed or caste to offer protection, even to his deadly enemy. Pashto to a Pakhtun is not only his language, but is also the embodiment of all human virtues.²⁴

jirga, *melmustyā* (hospitality), *nanawāti* (seeking forgiveness in a feud), *panā* (asylum), *ghayrat* (modesty), *nang* (honour of the family), *tigah* (truce) and *rogħa* (reconciliation) help to strengthen peace in Pakhtun society. All

²⁴ See a list of some of the components of *Pakhtunwali* on page 11.

these character traits are the result of being brought up in the culture of *Pakhtunwali*. It is the culture which shapes the character of people. This culture has different aspects and various institutions which form the true spirit of the people. It is beyond any doubt that Pakhtuns are diehard lovers of their *Pakhtunwali* and hold it in high esteem and deem it a precious asset of their national pride. Pakhtuns consider their code of conduct one of the best and ideal systems of the world based on moral values. This is because there is a great possibility of satisfying human aspirations and expectations whether spiritual or material. But one has to understand the philosophy of pure *Pakhtunwali*.

The popular Indian author, Dr Rafiq Zakaria in his celebrated book "A study of Nehru" has quoted the remarks of Jawaharlal Nehru about the tribal way of living in India which fits the Pakhtuns as well. He wrote,

"Indeed, it is quite absurd to call them backward. An average crowd of some of these tribes would probably be more advanced in many ways than an average crowd else where in India. The tribal people are virile; they are highly disciplined; they are often a great deal more democratic than most others in India. Above all they are a people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life, not people who sit in stock exchanges, shout at each other and think themselves civilized. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them, but should rather try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture. We should not judge results by statistics or the amount of money but the quality of human character evolved."

History shows that whenever Pakhtuns had leaders of vision and farsightedness, capable of understanding true *Pakhtunwali*, the real and basic features of their culture have become visible. Whenever aliens have accessed this culture following set principles, Pakhtuns have welcomed them and the

union has always resulted in peace and prosperity. Pakhtuns have contributed towards establishing peace and stability in the world, but this history has not been written yet. Perhaps the cultural history of Pakhtuns until now lays scattered in their proverbs, traditions, songs and folklore. However, a large piece of it has been preserved in Pashto literature.

Before examining the literary genres and oral traditions which will reveal the true picture of Pakhtun culture, it is better to discuss the image of Pakhtuns in the world in the wake of new geopolitical scenarios shaped by other people. Pakhtuns are considered as a martial and warrior race, and there is no denying the fact that Pakhtuns have fought many battles and wars. They have shown resistance against Alexander the Great, the Iranian Darius, Zaheeruddin Babar, then Aurangzeb Alamgir, followed by Ranjit Singh and the British. Trapped in the Great Game, Pakhtuns seriously suffered in the Russian invasion. Pakhtuns have fallen prey to world politics and have faced a war like situation even after the disintegration of Russia.

Khushal Khan Khattak²⁵ has rightly depicted this bizarre situation of Pakhtuns in one of his couplets.

لایو شور راځینې لارڼه وي بل راشي
مگر زه پیدا په ورځ د شور و شریم

"I am constantly in the grip of pandemonium;
probably I am born on the day of chaos."

The land of Pakhtuns enjoys a significant strategic geographical importance in the world politics. It has both political and strategic dimensions. Unfortunately, before taking an in-depth study of the Pakhtun's

²⁵ Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1689) was a prominent Pakhtun poet, warrior and chief of the Khattak tribe. He wrote a large collection of poems calling on Afghans (Pakhtuns) to unite against the Mughal army. He was a renowned military fighter and became known as the "Afghan Warrior Poet".

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cultural values, world powers in their ecstatic state of unprecedented strength directly plunged into war with Pakhtuns. This is not the first incident in their history. Many such incidents have taken place in the life of Pakhtuns. In the recent past, during the Great Game, the two world powers, the British and Russians, against the wishes of Pakhtuns, first made this pure land a central playing-field for their political game and, secondly, without understanding the traditions and Pakhtun psyche, began their game of intrigue which resulted in constant clashes. The three Afghan wars between Pakhtuns and the British is ample proof in history as to who is to be blamed for destroying the peace in the land of Pakhtuns.

Literature created during the wars reflects a strong desire for peace and Pakhtun folklore contains aspirations for establishing lasting peace. After the Afghan Wars, when Pakhtun soldiers were fighting on different fronts during the Second World War, Pakhtun mothers, sisters and girls have longed for peace as shown in their songs, and this strong desire for stability and peace has a loud echo in the Pashto folk literature.

tappas are a unique folk literary genre sung with or without musical instruments in which mostly Pakhtun women express their feelings and emotions in a befitting manner. Almost every Pakhtun male and female is gifted with natural poetic talent to compose *tappas* on any occasion and subject. *tappas* have encompassed every aspect of Pakhtun life. Peace, and love of peace, has always been the favorite subject of the *tappa*. A few examples of *tappas* reflecting this love or longing for peace follow:

"Your love has made me so caring that I don't even dare trample an ant
for fear of its being separated from its life partner."

"I am so tired of wars that I won't even fight the battle of love."

"If respect could be achieved through fighting wars, then all the villages would have
been led by dogs."

After the Second World War, there began the long and crucial period

of the Cold War. It divided the world into two hostile blocs. This division gave a new sense of peace to the peoples of the world. As a consequence of the Cold War, Vietnam was entangled into a hot war. The atrocities being meted out to the oppressed people of Vietnam roused the conscience of the enlightened peoples of the world to sympathize with them. Voices for self determination of the people of Vietnam were raised in world literature. With it, an organized world literary movement directed at establishing peace and stability in the world took strong root in every nook and corner of the globe.

Pakhtun poets and writers were not lagging behind other peoples in this regard. They too were desirous to bring peace and stability to a chaotic world. A strong literary movement in Pashto literature started in favour of Vietnam, and for establishing peace at all levels which is reflective of the Pakhtun's love for peace. In this connection, two masterpieces of the popular revolutionary poet and critic Qalandar Momand should be mentioned: '*Da Alami Zamir Pah num*' (In the Name of the World's Conscience) and '*Da Veitnam Charbeta*'. They are representative poems of Pashto literature. The rough English translation of the first and last stanzas of the poem "*Da Alami Zamir Pah num*" is given:

زه تير و او ظلمتونو ازلي دشمن يم
لكه د نمرمي هميشه د شپې ځيگر خيرلې
ما پخپل ځان لمبې گاللي زما زړه سوځيده
خو مې د شپې حجاب د څړيكيو په خنجر خيرلې

تر خپله د مظلوم په مرسته ټينگ ولاړيم
الجزائر و پوښتي و گوري کشمير څه وائي؟
چې نن په ما ده نو په ما ده په ارام پراته يئ
يه د دنيا اولسه تاسو ته ضمير څه وائي؟

"I am an absolute enemy of aggression and tyranny.
Like the sun's rays, I have torn down curtain of night's darkness;
I have carried the burden of hardships on my heart.
I have torn down the curtain of night's darkness through the sword of my pangs.

I have stood firmly by the destitute to the best of my capability.
Ask about Algazire and what Kashmir demands from you?
Today it is my turn to have been in trouble, while you take your ease.
O! People of the world, ask your conscience and what does it tell you?"

Likewise, poems in Pashto literature have been created to throw light on every such important major incident. Pakhtun poets and writers have expressed deep anguish and concern over any kind of aggression and have resisted it strongly in their writings. The poems '*Lomumba*' and '*Da Algazire Jameela*' by Fazle Haq Shaida reflect hatred for war and a strong desire for reconciliation and peace. In the wake of the world-wide struggle for peace, Pakhtun poets and writers have given a significant place to this interesting subject. The impact of the world literary movement filtered down and cast indelible marks on modern Pashto literature.

The poem '*aman*' (Peace) by a twentieth century Pakhtun poet was recommended for entry into the gallery of the United Nations Organizations (UNO) and a letter in this regard was also written to the then Secretary General of the UNO. This poem earned the title of *Shaa'ir-i- aman* for the senior Pashto poet Pir Gauhar and it still enjoys fame under this title. A translation of the first and last stanzas of the poem is presented here:

زه غواړم په امن له ازغيو د اېشيا لمن
نه غواړم چې سوځي په لمبو د اېشيا لمن
ډكه دې وي تل په گلو سرو د اېشيا لمن

ستا يمه شاعر په پښتو د اېشيا لمن
بس په حق انصاف دې په ريشتيا خبره سپينه شي
غواړمه چې ټوله دنيا مينه مينه شي

دا د باشعورو نړۍ غواړم چې اباده وي
ورک دې شي بمونه او جنگونه ملک برباد وي
امن امن امن بس په امن دې تل ښاده وي
دا ځانگود امن دې رېشتيا په امن ياده وي
څار دې امريکه له روسه روس دې څار له چينه شي
غواړمه چې ټوله دنيا مينه مينه مينه شي

"I wish Asia to be secured from thorns²⁶

I am against the flames of war which burn the land of Asia.
I wish that the flowers of peace to blossom in Asia.
I am a poet of Pashto and I admire peaceful Asia in my mother tongue.
Let all the disputes be settled through dialogue on merit.
I wish the whole world to be bound in the net of love.
I wish this world of civilized people would remain prosperous.
To hell with bombs and wars that bring destruction.
Let the world remain joyful through peace and peace alone.
Let this cradle of peace be always remembered as a peace loving region.

²⁶ In oriental poetry a thorn is the symbol of evil.

Let America befriend Russia and Russia be tied into the knot of friendship with China."

This sense of love for peace and hatred for war, which had been aroused among Pakhtuns as a result of an organized movement, is of much historical significance and could be termed an historic revolution. This movement was launched in the earlier decades of the twentieth century when all the Pakhtuns were gathered and took up arms to resist the British aggression against their territorial and value systems. During the freedom struggle of the subcontinent from the British clutches of power, the efforts of non-violence of the great Pakhtun leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as 'Bacha Khan' are crystal clear to every one in the world. Likewise, his views on different political issues after partition regarding India, Kashmir and Afghanistan have proved both true and one hundred percent correct. This shows the innate Pakhtun philosophy towards peace and mutual understanding.

A visionary, revolutionary, farseeing and peacemaking leader of charismatic qualities, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, appeared on the scene and gave a slogan of peace to the centuries old war stricken warrior Pakhtun folk. He was a *khan* (landlord) by status, but his heart was throbbing with the pains of the poor masses. He initiated a movement along with some of his other sincere companions which was not new in nature but unprecedented in the history of Pakhtuns on their land.

The movement came to be known as *Khudai Khidmatgar Tehrik*. The manifesto of this movement was the philosophy of nonviolence, brotherhood and peacemaking. It was a successful movement which turned even the warrior Pakhtuns into nonviolent people. The *Khudai Khidmatgar Tehrik* of Baacha Khan drove away the pride of *khan*-ism and feudalism from the powerful *khans* and landlords among the Pakhtuns. It defeated the pride of the powerful people and gave a new hope to the weak and the destitute. The movement united both the *khan* and the poor man on one single platform. For the first time, Bacha Khan brought unity in the ranks of Pakhtuns. He

brought them all—including *khan*, tenant, labourer, wage earner and craftsman—towards a freedom gained through equity and humanism. He taught them the meaning of human freedom in clear words.

Bacha Khan freed Pakhtun folk from the clutches of the British through the philosophy of nonviolence. His determination was firm like a rock. Ordeals and tribulations and imprisonments could not weaken his strong will. He suffered every kind of trouble for the sake of his people. People from every walk of life were drawn to the *Khudai Khidmatgar Tehrik*.

The movement had a deep impact on Pashto language and literature. Nonviolent philosophy carved out a niche in Pashto literature and occupied a prominent place for itself. That is why we see glimpses of thoughts and desires for peace, fraternity and reconciliation along with the freedom struggle. It is, therefore, deemed as a brilliant chapter in the history of Pakhtuns. It was the era when the Great Game was being played in the land of Pakhtuns. After the Great Game came the Second World War, and then the Cold War, and soon the land was once again trapped by the Russian invasion. Given this strong pull towards peace, it is very difficult to understand why Pakhtuns are type-caste as a 'warrior nation'.

They only fight wars for *nang* (honour). Unfortunately, nobody has made the effort to understand the value of *nang* in Pakhtun's culture. If they had, the Pakhtuns inclination towards peace would have been quickly revealed.

The world's peoples have condemned the Russian aggression against Pakhtuns but remained oblivious to their incredible sufferings. The Russian invasion created such unrest on the land of Pakhtuns that it forced every peace loving Pakhtun to take up arms which resulted in the disintegration of the former USSR. Warlords emerged to serve the interests of the West, the negative consequences of which are still actively visible in the fabric of the whole society. Against the backdrop of 9/11, once again disastrous chaos was imposed on the territory of Pakhtuns in the name of peace; and once

again Pakhtuns came into limelight to be called 'terrorists' and 'religious fanatics' across the globe.

This is, in fact, another mistake. Superpowers, unaware of Pakhtun culture, history and psyche, think that they (Pakhtuns) could be subjugated at gunpoint. This goes against the tide of learning from history. It has been justifiably said, "We learn from history that we don't learn from history."²⁷ It may not be difficult to grab Pakhtun's territory by force but to digest it (by force) is the most crucial task.

Some historians have termed Pakhtuns as a warrior race in the annals of history, but it is not the whole truth. Looking into the past will reveal to us that the growth of the glorious Gandhara civilization as it reached its zenith reflected the Pakhtun's natural love for peace. Also, collectively accepting the religion of Islam as a result of the decision of the *jirga*, provides us with a proof of their love for peace and security as it stems from the very spirit of the religion. It is a different view altogether that Islam is also being considered in these days as the religion of terror and a threat to world peace; which is, in fact, a misunderstanding and reflects to some extent a clash of civilizations.

It needs an explanation as to why civilized *Pakhtunwali*, soaked in the teachings of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Islam, should be presented in such a way to the world's peoples. The world today wants to know about the true nature of the Pakhtun value-system. Any serious enquiry must keep in mind that in addition to its own indigenous natural characteristics it has a medley of all those features of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Islam which can guarantee world peace. The question is, why peace should not be maintained on the land where Zoroaster spread his teachings successfully, where the Gandhara civilization attained its pinnacle, and where Islam is being practiced in its true letter and spirit.

As mentioned earlier, *Pakhtunwali* and its culture is an unwritten

²⁷ A quote from the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831).

constitution preserved mostly in the oral traditions of Pakhtuns. It would be not an exaggeration to say that the Pakhtun society has more peace-inviting terminologies than any other peace-loving society in the world. The practical examples that can be cited are *rogħa sāza* (reconciliation), *tigah* (truce), *panā* (asylum, shelter), *jirga maraka* (council of elders), *baramta* (security), *melmustyā* (hospitality) and many more. The *hujra* is the hub of many social activities in a Pakhtun's way of life. It plays a very important role in keeping peace among various sections of village people. The terms *hujra* and *joomāt* (guest house and mosque) symbolize a sense of decorum and seriousness with regard to the social and religious responsibilities of Pakhtuns. Different issues relating to peace and stability and other village disputes are brought under discussion in the *hujra* and resolved through the census of the *jirga*. These institutions are practiced in everyday life of Pakhtuns.

In addition to the message of peace that can be drawn from folk songs, one can also feel an intense and clearly visible propensity towards peace and stability in the classical literature of Pakhtuns. This is because the concept of peace is closely linked to the cultural values of Pakhtuns, and is held in high esteem. If there is no threat to a Pakhtun's honour (*nāmus*), both on the individual and collective levels, and if the situation in which he lives is secure, then the question doesn't arise that any Pakhtun will take up arms.

When honour is under-threat, then saving it is a positive aspect of a Pakhtun's culture. True *Pakhtunwali* also favours this concept. Khushal Khan Khattak versifies this in his couplet.

جہان شرم نام و تنگ دے
کہ دا نہ وی جہان ږنگ دے

"It is (better) to live with honour in this world,
(for) without it, the world is anarchy."

Lord Russell²⁸ said, "If peace cannot be maintained with honour, it is no longer peace." Pakhtuns always desire to strengthen this honour. For the sake of constant peace, they will leave their hearths and homes, but they will never compromise on the question of honour. Perhaps this is the reason that Pakhtuns do not build cement houses which are either left behind or demolished in safeguarding the cause of honour.

It has been said, "Peace won by compromise is usually a short lived achievement."²⁹ Having natural democratic thinking about safeguarding honour, Pakhtuns are equal, irrespective of their social status. Honour has the same meaning for poor, affluent, weak and strong Pakhtuns, therefore it is obligatory upon everybody to take care of everybody else's honour. A large number of Pashto proverbs contain this concept. A few examples are given here:

"A city can be run better by a sweet tongue than by a sharp sword."

"A hundred rupees are not worth a single good word."

"To rule requires wisdom."

"Avoiding beating a man with your finger and he will not kick you."

History has witnessed to this very fact that uncertain situations have always forced Pakhtuns to take up arms. These uncertain situations are nothing but the fear of losing this honour due to foreign intervention.

If even today the world superpowers ensure the protection of Pakhtun honour, not a single Pakhtun will ever like to go to war with anyone at any cost. To make it very clear, this honour is not a so called misnomer but rather

²⁸ John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, KG, GCMG, PC (1792-1878), served twice as British Prime Minister in the mid-19th century.

²⁹ Winfield Scott, American general, 1786-1866.

very meaningful in its individual perspective. Tired of the centuries-old wars at the hands of foreign powers and at the behest of their expansionistic desires, Pakhtuns of the modern day whose country and people have been destroyed have a strong desire for peace.

The world should now understand the true spirit of *Pakhtunwali* and Pakhtuns and should access them through their cultural traditions. No other nation perhaps knows better the importance of dialogue than Pakhtuns. Khushal Khan Khattak, the national poet of Pakhtuns has said long ago,

نېدوبست د مملکت شي په خبرو
يو تر سلو صدق شه سل تر زرو

"A state can be managed best through means of dialogue.

One could be sacrificed for a hundred and the hundred be sacrificed for the number of the opinions of a thousand persons."

One can derive deep meanings reflecting the democratic thought of the poet in this couplet. In another couplet, Khushal Khan Baba says,

نوراني کا هغه ځای چې سره کښېني
دېرینه څلور یاران په مصلحت

"If a few close friends sit together to reach a compromise, they will enlighten the very place."

Emphasizing the need for dialogue Khushal Baba says,

هغه کار چې په نرمۍ تر سره کېږي
څه حاجت چې رساوه یې تر جنگونه

"(If) any dispute can be resolved through moderation,
there is no need to resolve it through war."

Condemning the miscreants and trouble makers Khushal Khan Baba says,

رخنه گر هرگز د ملک د پرېښوونه دے
که هر خوئي شفاعت شېخ و ملاکا

"A trouble maker should not be tolerated in the country at any cost,
even if he has the support of a Mullah or a saint."

Advocating and adopting the way of dialogue in order to arrive at a consensus on any issue is very old among Pakhtun culture. All Pakhtun intellectuals, poets and writers have advocated the adoption of democratic norms in their writings.

The other prominent and deep impact on the Pakhtun's outlook comes from their spiritual leaders and literary giants. Pir Roshan's teachings and the whole Roshanite literature advocate the promotion of peace and reconciliation. Different mystic disciplines have created poets like Rahman Baba whom we call a poet of humanism. The tremendous popularity of Rahman Baba among Pakhtun society is ample evidence of their love and deep attachment to peace.

A large portion of Rahman Baba's poetry consists of verses which give a message of morality and high human values. Had peace been against Pakhtun nature, how would Rahman Baba gain such enormous popularity among Pakhtuns? The fact is that those verses of Rahman Baba which contains the message of peace have received much worldwide public applause. For example, he says,

کرد گلو کره چې سيمه دي گلزار شي
ازغي مه کره په پښو کښې به دي خار شي

"Grow the crop of flowers so as to make the whole area flowery
don't grow thorns, they will prick your own feet."

While teaching about goodness, Rahman Baba says,

که بل بد کاندې ته ښه ورسره وکا
هر يو نخل چې مېوه لري سنگسار شي

"You do well to others despite their mistreatment to you. Look at a tree bearing ripe
fruit,
it will give you fruit even if you throw stones at it."

Advocating humbleness and humility he says,

دهقان کر په لوړه زمکه باندې نه کا
سر کوزي کوه چې ښي دې مرغزار شي

"The farmer does not grow a crop on high fields,
likewise you too should remain submissive and humble for your garden to flourish"

زهر ښه دي که په صلح په صلاح وي
نه شکرې په فتنو او په غوغا

"Getting poison through peaceful way is better
than getting sweets by means of fighting."

چې د ورور د عزيز زړه پرې ازارېږي
حاصل مه شه هسې رنگې مدعا

"It is better not to achieve any goal
which hurts near and dear ones' hearts."

There is no end to such sublime verses.

The gray colour of Pakhtun clothing symbolizes their down-to-earth-nature. Pakhtuns like the dye made from the ashes of *spalmai* (*Calotropis Gigantea*); and this color is also a symbol of the tradition of nonviolence.

One can't help but ask, why and for what end did peace loving Pakhtuns begin (or were forced into) to need to grab power and resort to aggression? Why were Pakhtuns, who used to live a prosperous life in their clay-made mud houses, compelled to build forts and towers? They used to wear flowers in their turbans once upon a time, but now they take pride in carrying guns on their shoulders. Who did all this mischief to them? This is simply tragic and nothing else.

Pakhtuns are misrepresented and misinterpreted by the world media and have lashed out at anti-Pakhtun propaganda calling them terrorists and religious fanatics which they had never been and would never be. This is a serious blunder committed by the world community, the consequences of which were worst in the past but will also cast black shadows in future for world peace. The best thing would be to discover and explore Pakhtuns, their history, social traditions and customs and cultural heritage in their true perspective. People should know and understand the structure and functioning of the Pakhtun *jirga* system. They should try to comprehend the philosophy of the council of elders (*jirga*) as a strong peace-making social institution.

If the Bonn conference of *Loya Jirga*³⁰ could bring peace, stability and democracy to the war ravaged country of Afghanistan, then Pakhtuns can also play their due role in establishing world peace and can contribute a great deal to the spread a culture of global peace. Mutual understanding is a pre-requisite for accomplishing such a gigantic task. Before converging on one platform, world cultures should develop and enhance a sense of tolerance and mutual understanding in a better way among their own peoples. To establish an everlasting peace on the surface of the earth, the Pakhtun moral system can be best exploited at world level.

The *jirga* and its institutions have a very long history, beginning with the Aryans. *sabah*, *shura*, *ghunḍa*, *nāsta* and *maraka* are other names for a Pakhtun council, but *jirga* is the name which is more widely known. It is this *jirga* which makes the Pakhtun culture and Pakhtuns peaceful and peace-loving. The very concept of *jirga* is based on peace.

A *jirga* is a council of elders whose representatives are selected from among the different *khels* (sections) of a village, *sima* (area) and *qabila* (tribe). The *jirga* and its traditions are very old and the best peacemaking institution in Pakhtun culture. Pakhtuns resolve all of their disputes and conflicts through the decisions of a *jirga*.

A *jirga* functions at local as well as a national level. A local *jirga* works to resolve the various issues and conflicts arising among village people while a national *jirga* (*Loya Jirga*) is a much bigger council held to resolve conflicts and any other affairs pertaining to a crisis situation, in order to bring peace among the warring tribes and also to select the head of the government. This *jirga* enjoys the powers to resolve political, social, economic, cultural and religious issues. It eliminates tension, quarrels and misunderstanding existing among people of the society. A *jirga* is preceded by *maraka* (discussion) which develops a consensus among members before taking a firm and

³⁰ *loya jirga* (grand council) is a gathering of male representatives from different tribes, communities and sub-tribes. A *loya jirga* held was held in Bonn, Germany in December 2001 to discuss the then situation in Afghanistan.

righteous decision regarding any issue at hand. To accept a *jirga's* verdict is considered as a sacred social responsibility. Nobody can violate the laws of the *jirga*, whether it is a huge penalty in terms of money, the demolition of a house, or excommunication.

The local *jirga* comprises of those well chosen representatives whose honesty, fairness, courage and straightforwardness are widely acknowledged by village people. It is essential for every member of the *jirga* to have integrity of character, truthfulness and outspokenness. He must have the quality of being intelligent and farsighted and must know the rules and regulations of the *jirga* and *Pakhtunwali*. A *jirga* functions and takes decisions according to the principles and laws of *Pakhtunwali*. It is absolutely necessary for a *jirga* to be held at a neutral place where all the members are traditionally supposed to sit on the ground in a circle. That is why every member can be seen carrying a *chadar* (sheet of cloth) so that he can lay it down to sit on.

The Pashto proverb

"You better leave the village but don't ignore the customs of the village"

explains one of the basic principles of the *jirga*. It means that one can leave the village but can not violate the principles laid down in the traditions and customs of *Pakhtunwali*.

At a local level too, the *jirga* paves the way for peace and reconciliation to be brought among people regarding any issue or conflict. A *jirga* enjoys the authority conferred on its members by people hailing from every walk of life. A *jirga* has the capability to resolve conflicts between two opposing groups, tribes and even two nations. It can also play a part in creating a favourable atmosphere for peace and tranquillity between government forces and tribesmen. The decisions of the *jirga* are so long-lasting that those made with the British in the tribal agencies are still honoured. The present unrest and uprising in Waziristan is said to be because of the violation of those

decisions by the government. Had the government taken the tribesmen into confidence through a *jirga*, resistance to the army would have not been that severe.

History tells us that the strength of the Ghori and Lodhi dynasties was the result of a consultation of brethren Pakhtuns through a *jirga* of the earlier Monarchs before Ibrahim Lodi. When he ignored this practice of his forefathers, the Pakhtuns left him alone and this caused his defeat in the first Battle of Panipat.³¹ Ahmad Shah Abdali, fondly remembered as Ahmad Shah Baba, the founder of modern Afghanistan, had access to the throne through the decision of a *jirga*.³²

The history of all those *jirgas* has not been written so far, but there are many *jirgas* which have changed the course of history. Much interesting evidence could be found about how historical decisions were made. All the peace agreements that had been reached between the British and Pakhtuns were taken by *jirgas*.

It is need of the hour that we should know the depth of the prediction of Allama Muhammad Iqbal which he had made in of one his Persian couplets.

اسيا يک پیکر اب و گل است
ملت افغان در آن پیکر دل است

³¹ Ibrahim Lodi (d. April 21, 1526) was an Afghan Pakhtun from the Ghilzai tribe, who ruled over much of India from 1517 to 1526. He was hated and feared by those he ruled, resulting in the invitation by some of his nobles to Babur of Kabul to invade India. Lodi died in the Battle of Panipat where the desertion of many of Lodi's soldiers led to his downfall, despite superior troop numbers. He was the last in the Lodi dynasty to be the Sultan of India.

³² Ahmad Shah Abdali, also known as Ahmad Shah Durrani (c.1722-1773), was the founder of the Durrani Empire and is considered by many to be the founder of modern Afghanistan. In 1747, the chiefs of the Abdali (Durrani) tribes met near Kandahar for a *Loya Jirga* to choose their new leader. As a result of their discussions, the leaders unanimously agreed that Ahmad Shah be chosen to lead the tribes.

از فساي اوفساي اسيا از كشاد او كشاد اسيا

"Asia is a body made up of water and clay.

The Afghans³³ possess the place of the heart in this body.

Disturbances in this heart will cause disturbance to the whole of Asia

and its nourishment is the flourishing of Asia."

This one prophecy of a visionary poet is sufficient for the world's peoples to open their eyes.

We have recently experienced this phenomenon in Afghanistan. The unprecedented destruction in Afghanistan brought the whole world to uncertainty and political turmoil. Now the war on terrorism is being fought on Pakhtun lands without going into the depth of understanding the psyche of Pakhtuns. It could be made effective only if a way of dialogue according to the cultural traditions and social norms of the Pakhtuns is adopted. An understanding of their moral system is a must which regulates and governs their inner and outer life style. This moral system is embedded in their language and literature.

Many Pakhtun poets have composed poems reflecting and highlighting the miserable plight of Pakhtuns focusing on how they are suffering under the ropes of great powers and vested interests. Now when there is a paradigm shift causing a remarkable change in Pakhtun's cultures leading them to perpetual peace, Pakhtuns are also contributing towards the efforts of making peace at a world level. In addition, they have speeded up the pace of peace making efforts at local levels.

They are very conscious of the so called 'clash of civilizations' which

³³ Meaning 'Pakhtuns'.

results in the absence of dialogue and mutual understanding. Democratic nations of the world should keep in view that other civilizations should also have the right to flourish and that they should avoid hurting the feelings of peoples who come from various cultural identities across the globe. This is in fact an evolutionary process, while revolution invites war and conflict. Exercising power will not work to resolve issues; while 'change' in the world can be brought about through an evolutionary process. While this may take years, and even centuries, there is truth in the maxim that 'Rome was not built in one day'. Everybody should work to eliminate the Machiavellian way of ruling from our world.

We strongly believe that peace efforts can only be made effective if peace elements among the world cultures are highlighted and the general masses are made aware of this human's everlasting tie. Pakhtun history, culture, social traditions and literature can work as catalysts for accelerating the pace of the peace process in the world.



The Struggle to Change the Mindset for Durable Peace

Can non-violence defeat violence and terrorism?

The topic I am going to talk on raises a very difficult question and it is not clear whether it has some relation to the non-violence movement of Bacha Khan; however I will try to talk in the perspective of *Pakhtunwali*, Pakhtuns and the movement for non-violence.

The purpose is perhaps to say something about the non-violence movement of Bacha Khan among the Pakhtuns in the early 20th century. The movement, through which Bacha Khan tried to change the mindset of the Pakhtuns and to create a greater understanding among them to establish peace, was the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. As far as the sub- title of the topic is concerned, that is, can non-violence defeat violence and terrorism, the answer seems difficult, because the international intelligentsia and think-tanks so far appear to have failed in finding out a proper solution. If it is related to terrorism on the international level or among Afghans, then no movement in this regard has fully achieved success so far.

In India, Gandhi Ji³⁴ tried to spread the philosophy of non-violence and was successful to a great extent, but it remained among the Indians for the life of Gandhi Ji and he himself was assassinated through violence. After Gandhi Ji, the violence during partition and three wars between India and Pakistan negate the legacy of Gandhi Ji that Indians were following principles and philosophy of non-violence. Whoever was responsible for this violence and the wars are different issues. As far as a movement of non-violence of Bacha Khan in Lower Pakhtunkhwa is concerned, this also remained successful to some extent during the lifetime of Bacha Khan, but soon came to an end.

³⁴ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948); also called *Bapu* (meaning 'father').

If charismatic personalities like Gandhi Ji and Bacha Khan could successfully educate and persuade the masses, then a new movement for non-violence can be started, otherwise this song of Ilabib Jalib becomes a great question itself:

ظلم رہے اور امن بھی ہو کیا
ممکن ہے؟ تم ہی کہو

"Can injustice and peace happen at the same time? You decide."

According to the sayings of Hazrat Ali (RAA); a state can remain integrated in infidelity but cannot stay in tyranny. As long as oppression exists in the world, a place for peace will be difficult to find.

To change mindsets and bring about mental revolution is the task of prophets or great social reformers like Gandhi Ji and Batha Khan, who were true to their mission and could educate people through reasonable teachings about a durable peace which is a prerequisite for the progress of civilization.

If the question is posed about Pakhtuns only, then it becomes more difficult to answer, because the culture of *Pakhtunwali* has its own philosophy, the foundations of which lay in the principles of equality. Bringing peace among Pakhtuns through the actual teachings of *Pakhtunwali* would not be that difficult if respect for its rules and laws are properly taught. The Pakhtun code and its concepts of *nang* (honour), *sharam* (shame), *peghor* (taunt) and *badal* (revenge) are difficult to change. The code of revenge creates violence. If a person like Bacha Khan was to be born in this generation, or Bacha Khan's teachings of non-violence could be spread, this would help define anew the value of Pakhtun honour. This way the concept of revenge will also be changed.

The Pakhtun nation consists of four to five thousand tribes, sub-tribes and clans and this is thought to be the largest tribal structure in the world.

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The Pakhtun nation consists of four to five thousand tribes, sub-tribes and clans and this is thought to be the largest tribal structure in the world.

Peace could be set up among them through the *jirga* system. Age-old enmities and disputes among the tribes can be settled on reasonable conditions, but for the fulfilment of this purpose, a leader of Bacha Khan's stature would be required.

Bacha Khan, who devoted his whole life for social service and the improvement of Pakhtun society, was a great preacher of non-violence. He was a Khudai Khidmatgar; he was true to himself and to the nation; and he was a selfless worker for the good of humanity. He was also, brave and bold and a courageous and resolute-minded person. His teachings for the Khudai Khidmatgars were as follows: Whatever you say do it practically. Don't be involved in groupings. Don't be involved in court cases. Don't pursue enmities. Do not be cruel and a tyrant. Whoever harms you, reciprocate by doing good to him. Create good conduct, good character and good habits in yourselves. Always help and join the oppressed. Always tell the truth. Avoid evil, sin malefaction and wickedness. Always be clean, pure and chaste.

For him, these were the qualities of a true Khudai Khidmatgar. He disliked hypocrisy, so first of all, he became a true Khudai Khidmatgar, and then he invited Pakhtuns to become like him. Because these characteristics, to some extent, are naturally present in true Pakhtuns, a great many people responded to Bacha Khan's invitation and became Khudai Khidmatgars. If this fact is recognized and kept to the forefront of thinking, then it would not be impossible for the Pakhtuns to change their life style once again. The movement of Khudai Khidmatgari proved it practically by their avoidance of any sort of violence during the British rule; so much so that Bacha Khan's ribs were broken at Mir Wais Ghundai near Mardan when he was kicked in the chest. The person involved in this brutal act (called Khushdal) was afterwards he was forgiven, though it would have been easy for the Zalmai Pakhtuns to take revenge.

It is worth noting that the Zalmai Pakhtun Organization was formed by Ghani Khan. It was a company of Pakhtun youth willing to fight for the

cause. When the Organization was formed, Bacha Khan was initially opposed to it; he was very angry about its formation and seriously scolded Ghani Khan. However, Bacha Khan agreed to the Organization's formation when Ghani Khan explained that its purpose was to stop Government agents from climbing on to the stage to cause disruption or harm the leaders. Their task was to keep discipline among the participants at the public rallies and gatherings.

Bacha Khan always laid stress upon becoming a true Khudai Khidmatgar. In one of his speeches he said;

"I have come here today to make you understand the true meaning of Khudai Khidmatgari. After this there should be only ten persons with me but they would not be the Khudai Khidmatgars just by name. Khudai Khidmatgars are such an army, in which every one could not be recruited. It's not an army like the British Army in which everybody could be enlisted. There is no distinction of good and bad in the British Army, but ours is an army of God. Only the pious can join who are able to abstain from all kinds of evils. This is my conviction (*imān*) that the salvation of Pakhtuns is in this type of Khudai Khidmatgari."

Bacha Khan described the criterion for a Khudai Khidmatgar as follows:

"This is a must for a Khudai Khidmatgar: first of all that he sit alone in a place, where there is only him and God and ask himself, keeping in mind the presence of Almighty Allah, that the characteristics which I have explained above, he accepts or not. Apparently you can deceive me and yourself but deceiving God is impossible, because Allah knows the affairs of our hearts. Not once or twice but ask your heart again and again if your heart suggests that the task is too difficult it is better you should abstain.

Now I inform you that the Congress has decided in Bombay that either the government accepts our demands or we start a war of patience. So you clearly understand that this war of ours would be different from the former one. It wouldn't be on the previous lines where there was too much harm. There would be no holdings of emergency public meetings."

Bacha Khan said,

"Non-violence has nearly become my religion. I yielded to the *ahinsa* of Gandhi Ji before this too. But after the exemplary success of this experience in my province, I have wholeheartedly become a supporter of non-violence. God willing, the people of my province will never look to violence again. Possibly I might become unsuccessful and a hell of violence is started in my province—if this occurs, then I will resign with patience, but with it no change in my belief will occur, because non-violence is the better way and the people of my province need it the most.

These are the words in which Bacha Khan himself stated his belief in non-violence and he was so clear about it that no further explanation is needed in this regard.

There can be no doubt that Bacha Khan had taken the philosophy of non-violence from Gandhi Ji, as he himself has confessed, but in the end he went much further ahead with it. The stalwarts of Congress, who were the near and dear of Gandhi Ji, could not follow non-violence as vehemently as Bacha Khan did, as was acknowledged by all those involved in the Congress at that time. Gandhi Ji himself had also admitted it.

When World War II started in 1939, the All India Congress Committee anonymously announced to support the British in the war, but Gandhi Ji opposed the war and helping the British he thought to be against the

principles of his *ahinsa*. On this occasion, Bacha Khan was the only person who supported Gandhi Ji and resigned from the Congress. Gandhi Ji was so impressed by this that he wrote in his newspaper,

"... all members of the working committee of Congress have slipped away from their beliefs but only Bacha Khan remained firm on it like a mountain."

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru thought of Gandhi Ji as his guru and would always call him "Bapu Ji", and would never say anything against the volition of Gandhi Ji. Nehru also confessed that,

"After Gandhi Ji, only Abdul Ghaffar Khan is the person who believes non-violence as his *dharma* and does not abandon his principles in any circumstances. He, in this regard, is the true follower of Gandhi Ji and no one amongst us, can compete with him."

Bacha Khan thought that non-violence was the only solution to the problems of Pakhtuns. The Pakhtun nation is thousands of years old. Peace among them was usually established through the *jirga*, the traditional council of elders. The *jirga* has resolved old enmities and has always been an effective institution of the culture of *Pakhtunwali*. Though the fact cannot be denied that Pakhtuns are a martial and warrior nation and have always had feuds among themselves, the institution of the *jirga* has its rules and regulations for keeping peace among the different tribes. This culture was only disturbed when foreign forces interfered in it. Before the British, peace existed among the tribes, but with the imposition of British law, a clash started not only with the rulers but also among the clans. This resulted in chaos in Pakhtun society. The British policies of settlement of land and registration and allotment of common land and property to their blue-eyed favourites gave birth to feuds among the tribes and families. This was the divide and rule policy of the British and rivalries and enmities started in

society. The age old process of keeping peace in the nation became ineffective. The weak and wicked would take cases to the courts of British law instead of to the *jirga*. The British law was in stark contrast to the laws of Pashto and a chaotic situation arose in the settled districts of Pakhtunkhwa. In the independent tribal areas, war with the British forces was going on in different locations. The British Empire was unhappy with the situation because it was a war arena. However, in the settled districts the situation was different. Peaceful demonstrations would be fired on and scores of people sent to jails.

It was against this background that the great Bacha Khan started his movement for the social transformation of Pakhtuns. First he formed the "Anjuman-i-Islahul Afghana" and afterwards the historic movement of the Khudai Khidmatgars. In the beginning it had no political designs except for social reform of society, but it turned into a freedom movement and ultimately merged with the Indian National Congress.

The movement served the nation in all spheres of cultural life, and brought political awareness among the people. It served the Pashto language and literature and established new schools of thought in literary traditions. When Bacha Khan was inspired by Gandhi Ji regarding the philosophy of non-violence, he dedicated his whole life to teaching its principles to the Pakhtuns.

He started the movement for spreading non-violence in the lower Pakhtunkhwa, and experienced a great deal of success. It was considered to be a wonder of Bacha Khan, that the restless Pakhtuns welcomed his invitation on a large scale. Pakhtuns threw away weapons and carried on the freedom movement in a civilized political way. This encouraged and strengthened Bacha Khan. They would take out peaceful processions; the British would provoke them but they would remain peaceful and stick to the principles taught by Bacha Khan. In Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Bazaar-i-Kalan in Peshawar city, in Takkar, Hati Khel, Kohat and Bannu, some savage violence was done by the forces, but Bacha Khan kept to his mission of non-violence.

He was given the titles of 'Sarhadi Gandhi', 'Fakhr-i-Afghan' and 'Badshah Khan' but became more popular by the name of 'Bacha Khan'. His dream of a united and non-violent India did not come true. He was much disheartened by the partition of India. It is to his credit, that during partition, there was less violence in his province than in the rest of India and the other provinces of Pakistan.

When Pakistan came into existence, the same atrocities continued and Bacha Khan was tortured in the new born country. He was called a traitor and barred from political activities. If the incident at Babarha is kept in mind in which hundreds of innocent Pakhtuns were mercilessly massacred after independence then one has to say that "it takes two to make a quarrel" or "it requires two hands to clap".³⁵

Non-violence is the most civilized way and can be practiced in a civilized society and with civilized people alone. You cannot practice it in a jungle among the beasts. One can play a game of football with players who know the game, but you cannot play any game with a person who doesn't know the game. The British, at that time though cruel, basically were a civilized nation; they could be impressed by non-violence. It is very different, however, when people consider non-violence to be cowardice.

The political traditions of Pakistan are full of violence. Dr. Khan Sahib, the elder brother of Bacha Khan was assassinated, his nearest friend Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai, who himself was a great preacher of non-violence, was also killed, but Bacha Khan did not budge a particle from the principles of non-violence. Bacha Khan carried on his mission of non-violence in an atmosphere of war, in a situation where always the conditions were, as the quatrain of the late Khyber Afridi says,

³⁵ The Babarha Massacre, 12th August, 1948. A mosque in Babarha (Charsadda) was attacked and many Pakhtun were killed or injured.

پوهېږم چې محفل ته په څه رنگ را جوړوي
د جنگ خبره نه ده خوته جنگ را جوړوي
رقيبہ بنه پوهيرې چې پښتون يم خيبر یم
حالات راته بيا څه له د اورنگ را جوړوي

I know the way you excite the congregation,
it's not the matter of war but you instigate it, O my rival!
You know well that I am a Pakhtun from Khyber,
why then are you creating circumstances like Aurang, the Mughal King.

The situation came to a point that a clash seemed inevitable. The followers of Bacha Khan were cornered and driven to the wall where there remained no alternative but violence, and the poet disciple of Bacha Khan came to the conclusion that,

ملگرو تش په لوگېدو او نشوه
ځي چې لمبه شو دا خپل ځان و سپزو

د نوي گل د خصمانې د پاره
دا زور خوړلې گلستان و سپزو

But Bacha Khan emphasized non-violence and in this way protected the settled area Pakhtuns from a disaster. In the tribal areas, Haji Sahib Turangzai, the Faqir of Api and other freedom fighters were active in an armed struggle against the British forces.

Now, if the issue is about peace among Pakhtuns alone, then there are simple and easy ways for it, but if they are continuously falling prey to foreign aggression and are victims of violence for no solid reason, then it is beyond one's understanding as to how an atmosphere of peace and non-violence could be created on their soil.

However the term "terrorism" and the conditions of war against terrorism are different. The Pakhtuns are living in an area whose strategic value is very significant. The Great Game between the then super-powers was fought there, and now the "war against terrorism" is being fought on their land. The players of the Great Game neglected the psyche of the Pakhtuns, and now the government and international forces are also neglecting the traditions and psychology of the people. Anthropologists have carried out research on the people for years and have published their research. Yet, once more international forces are using their power to dominate the Pakhtuns, rather than taking them into their confidence through dialogue and the *jirga*. This is certainly not in favour of peace, because "violence begets violence."

It is said that the terrorists have taken refuge in the country of the Pakhtuns and that force is being used to punish or eliminate them, but this logic seems invalid. If Pakhtuns could defeat the British Empire "on which the sun would never set" (now it doesn't rise in it), or if they are capable of defeating another super power like the USSR (now simply "Russia"), then how are they unable to extradite a hand full of foreigner terrorists from their land? The conditions are that they should be taken into confidence properly according to their customs.

Pakhtuns are a simple and straight-forward nation that believes in sincerity and honesty. There is a proverb about them that says, "A Pakhtun is like a lamb: if pulled by force towards heaven he will resist, but if taken with love to hell, he will go with you happily."

Now coming to the question asked in the sub-heading: "can non-violence can defeat violence and terrorism," I would say "yes". It is possible that non-

violence can defeat violent minds and terrorism, but the term "violence" must be explained in its true sense and meaning, and Pakhtuns must be taught and properly educated about terrorism.

If some anti-Pakhtun elements create misunderstandings about Pakhtuns for their own vested interests or want to level their old scores by giving false impressions or want to get benefits from the international community, they their propaganda against the Pakhtuns is that terrorists are sponsored and given shelter by them, then proper research should be done concerning the accusations.

Yes! I do agree that non-violence can defeat the violent minds and I would like to suggest that proper inquiries and unbiased investigations should be made through independent sources so that bombing of marriage processions, of gatherings for the ceremonies of circumcisions, of children playing football and meetings of the *jirga* elders can be avoided. Can this be forgotten or forgiven? Investigate properly, where do the terrorists come from? Who is supporting and financing them? If they are hiding in Pakhtun areas, then those particular areas should be properly located. Blind bombing is inhuman and non-violence cannot work in inhumanity. If Pakhtuns are dragged into the war of others and are made scapegoats, it is injustice and injustice is tyranny and the same question will arise:

ظلم رہے اور امن بھی ہو کیا
ممکن ہے؟ تم ہی کہو

"Can injustice and peace happen at the same time? You decide."

Because oppression is cruelty, tolerating cruelty is said to be crueller than cruelty itself. Ghani Khan writes in his book "The Pakhtuns":

"The Pakhtun has a tender heart but tries to hide it under a rough and gruff exterior. His father and mother try to inure him to the hardness of their own lives! 'The eyes of the dove are lovely,' they tell him, 'but the air is made for the hawk. So cover your dove like eyes and grow claws.'"

Non-violence is a civilized way which can only rouse conscientious minds. Unconscientious minds are dead minds, whether those are the minds of terrorists or the minds of the chastisers. As far as Pakhtuns are concerned the legendary Pashto singer Khayal Muhammad would say:

اشنا دی بد پھ ما ثبوت کری
بی بدوزرہ له مانہ خہ له بدوینہ



Pakhtuns' Struggle for Constitutional Governance and Civil Rights in Pakistan

As an introduction to the Pakhtuns' struggle for constitutional governance and civil rights in Pakistan, it is helpful to look at briefly at the historical background of the people and democratic nature of their society. This will help understanding of the people, their natural tendencies and love for democracy.

Pakhtuns are a freedom-loving nation and have always dwelt in the democratic culture of *Pakhtunwali*. This culture of *Pakhtunwali* has its own typical rules and laws, which are reflective of the Pakhtun nature. They are a democratic people. Every one has the same rights and privileges; no one is superior to another. To a great extent, they are individualistic, but they also respect *Pakhtunwali*. The laws of *Pakhtunwali* are imposed through the *jirga*. Deviation from the laws of the *jirga* is almost impossible for Pakhtuns meaning, therefore, that the *jirga* is the most important institution of *Pakhtunwali*.

The *jirga* is a council of those elders who are chosen by the people, but it is different in nature and formation to a parliament or assembly. In an assembly, the members represent a specific party or group. In contrast, every member of a *jirga* is free and independent and represents no one. This independence means that its members cannot be corrupted in any way. *Pakhtunwali* is like an unwritten constitution. Its decisions depend upon the traditions, called *narkh*.

Pakhtuns have a very ancient history, as old as the institution of *jirga*. In *Pakhtunwali* every member has an equal status. Everyone's rights and

privileges are protected by the *jirga*. The most significant of these privileges, is the right of each Pakhtun to keep his honour.

The system of *jirga* and *Pakhtunwali* is monitored and supported by the family (*khāndān*), brotherhood (*wrorwali*), cousinship (*tarburwali*), distant relations (*azizwali*), co-village (*kaliwali*), tribe (*khel*) and nation (*qamwali*). That's why no member of the *jirga* can go against the settled rules. Neither is any member capable of breaking any law set by the *jirga*. Following centuries of upbringing within the *jirga* system, every Pakhtun has a high regard for the laws of the *jirga*. He knows that he has to care for his own rights as well as the rights of others, and to often fight voluntarily for the rights of others.

The Mughals first disturbed the system of *Pakhtunwali*. After establishing their kingdom, they ruled only in the urban areas while Pakhtuns lived in the mountainous rural areas which remained independent and free. Except for Peshawar City and Kabul, the Pakhtun regions were not brought under the Mughal monarchy. Mughal kings tried their best to subdue the Pakhtuns, but to no avail. King Akbar the Great lost one of his dearest courtiers Birbal in this attempt, but could not vanquish the Pakhtuns.³⁶ Pir Roshan and Bayazid Ansari started movements against Akbar which continued till the time of Shah Jahan.

After becoming Muslims, Pakhtuns have always supported Islamic *sharia* because Islamic *sharia* is very near to the laws of Pashto. That is why they supported Aurangzeb in the war of succession, but when the hypocrisy of Aurangzeb was revealed to them, they were the first to start resistance against him in the subcontinent. Khushal Khan Khattak, Aimal Khan Momand and Darya Khan Afridi were the leaders who shook the foundations of the Mughal Empire. Mirwais Khan Ghilji fought the Persians for this

³⁶ Maheshdas Bhat (1528–1586), called 'Raja Birbal' was the *wazir-e azam* (Grand Vizier) of the Mughal court in the time of King Akbar. Raja Birbal died in the battle of Malandari Pass, attempting to quell unrest amongst the Pakhtun (Afghan) tribes in Northwest India. His death was reportedly caused by treachery.

reason and became the first ever Pakhtun to lay the foundations of Afghanistan, but the real founder of modern Afghanistan was Ahmad Shah Durrani who was chosen as king by a *jirga*.

When the Sikhs occupied Peshawar for thirty years, they could not rule the Pakhtuns outside the city wall.³⁷ The Sikhs were followed by the British, who faced a very severe resistance from the Pakhtuns. The British occupied the Pakhtun area in 1849 and made it a part of their Indian Empire. Originally the north-west was included in the Punjab Province, but as a part of British administrative changes Lord Curzon (1859–1925; Viceroy of India 1898–1905) separated it from Punjab in 1901 and gave it the name North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

The Asian sub-continent was called the Indian sub-continent prior 1947, when it was partitioned into two independent sovereignties, that is Pakistan and India. After 1970 it was further divided and now consists of three countries; Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Pakhtuns in the sub-continent form a majority of the NWFP, which was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010. However, prior to the British annexation, historically and geographically this province was not a part of the sub-continent but rather part of Central Asia.

"This province was called the "Frontier"—and this is very significant, because those were the days when the sun never set on the British Empire; it had scores of Frontiers. However, this frontier was picked for the singular honour of being called "the Frontier" because this was where the British lion faced the Russian bear. It was the intention of the British Government to emphasise its importance, and to let every Englishman know that this is the most important, crucial and strategic Frontier of the

³⁷ Peshawar was captured by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1818, but was not annexed by the Sikh Empire until 1834. It remained in Sikh hands until the British occupation in 1849.

British Empire. In order to ensure its proper defence, it was kept out of the so-called benevolence of British policy in India but administered through political officers—with no laws, no rights and no privileges—with their eyes on the Russian threat. The British kept Afghanistan as a buffer state, followed by the tribal areas, followed by the agencies as the third line of defence. After that came the settled districts. They were denied the benefit of the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms,³⁸ and when the Simon Commission³⁹ came, Sir John also agreed with those who had gone before him and said, "This province is like gun powder, any introduction of reforms would act as a matchstick." The people of the province and the tribal areas never accepted British occupation, and consistently struggled for their liberty and freedom."⁴⁰

In 1901, the province of the North West Frontier was created as the 11th province of India, but it was not given full status, for which the Pakhtuns struggled hard and relentlessly. There could be found no valley in the Pakhtun area where the blood of the people was not shed by the British Army. In the settled districts of the NWFP the movement was carried on in a non-violent way, but the people were tortured and jailed. In 1930, there were as many as 15,000 political prisoners in jails. Pakhtuns would hold peaceful demonstrations for civil rights but would be fired upon by government forces.

³⁸ The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were brought in by the British Government in India to introduce self-governing institutions gradually to India. The reforms take their name from Edwin Samuel Montagu, the Secretary of State for India between 1917 and 1922 and Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India between 1916 and 1921. The reforms formed the basis of the Government of India Act 1919.

³⁹ The Indian Statutory Commission was a group of seven British Members of Parliament that had been dispatched to India in 1927 to study constitutional reform. It was commonly referred to as the Simon Commission after its chairman, Sir John Simon.

⁴⁰ From the written statement made by Khan Abdul Wali Khan in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The massacre in the Qissa Khawani Bazar in Peshawar city (on April 23rd 1930) is still remembered every year as is the sacrifice of the lives of those who were either shot or crushed by the armed forces. Such is the case of the other peaceful rallies which were fired on in different cities and towns of the province. In Mardan district, in the village Tukker, in Kohat, in Hati Khel in Bannu, Utmanzai, Charsadda, Bazar-i-Kalan in Peshawar City and many other places where peaceful rallies and demonstrations of the people were fired upon because of their demand for civil rights and constitutional governance like the rest of the provinces of India. In Hazara at Haripur there is a graveyard of all those prisoners who were put behind bars and gave their lives languishing in jail. This is a testimony to the courage and zeal of the people who struggled for their rights.

As a result of these sacrifices the people achieved provincial autonomy. It is said that the Frontier Province was not given to the people as a gift, but it was grabbed from the British. Ultimately under the Government of India Act of 1935, the NWFP became the 11th province in India. Equal rights and legal and constitutional benefits were given to the people in the same way as the other provinces. The Provincial Assembly started functioning until the departure of the British in 1947. It all came after a very hard struggle by the Pakhtuns. In this way, from 1901 to 1935, the people persistently struggled for constitutional governance.

Pakhtuns were in the forefront of the freedom movement, but after Pakistan came into existence the same British laws remained in practice for several decades. In some ways it was felt to be a change for the worse. The Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) became a blacker law than it was in the times of British rule. The people struggled hard to change it, but no solution has so far been found. One aspect of the recent unrest among the tribal Pakhtuns is the FCR.

As one issue gives birth to another one, this constitutional and governance problem resulted in many other political and cultural crises. The present extremist religious attitude of the people seems to be as a result of

these unjust and inhuman laws. Reaction to these laws started in the very beginning of its introduction in 1848; continuous fighting with British troops, and later on with the Pakistan army, was the result of these laws. The government had only one solution to this problem which was in the form of bribing the religious mullahs and giving them importance over *jirga* members and *maliks* (traditional leaders in Pakhtun society). There were *maliks*, chosen by the government as their touts, who had no interest in solving the problems of the community. As the people had no common leader who would speak for the people, different tribes would revolt instead of trying negotiations and dialogue.

In the settled areas the situation was different to that of the tribal areas, although liaison took place between the two areas on political and tribal issues. In the settled districts people were forced to obey state laws even though these were in stark contrast to the laws of *Pakhtunwali*. The people would prefer their problems to be solved through a *jirga* but the police would intervene in the issue unnecessarily which would force the offender as well as the offended to abscond and take refuge in the tribal areas where they would thus become a *mafrur* (someone in hiding) and a *dacoit* (robber) and thus a challenge for law and order. This situation caused the people to keep away from acquiring education and the majority became ignorant, uneducated and superstitious.

Against this background, and in response to this situation, one man in the settled areas volunteered to educate the Pakhtuns. He started a movement for the social welfare of his people by forming an organization by the name "Anjuman-i-Islahul Afghana" meaning the 'organization for the improvement of Afghans'. The name of this person was Abdul Ghaffar Khan who was himself a Khan and a son of a local landlord. Ghaffar Khan became famous under the name of "Bacha Khan". He would play a significant role in the freedom movement of India and Pakistan.

The NWFP was treated differently by the British in comparison to the rest of India. Constitutional benevolences were given to other provinces

while Pakhtuns were kept deprived of these benefits because of their so-called special status, where prevailed a state of emergency. Pakhtuns were not allowed to take part in Indian politics. Bacha Khan organized Pakhtuns for the social welfare of their community. This organization later on turned into *Surakh Posh Tahreek* (Red Shirt Movement), which was ultimately merged into the Indian National Congress and carried out their movement from the platform of Congress.

In 1947 when Pakistan came into being, Bacha Khan and his party showed their loyalty to the new born state, but the attitude of the ruling Muslim League forced Bacha Khan to part ways with it. The very first unconstitutional step was taken by the Governor General of the newly born country, when he dissolved the government of Dr. Khan Sahib,⁴¹ who had the majority of seats in the NWFP Provincial Assembly. Dr. Khan Sahib had the support of thirty-three members in a house of fifty. He was unconstitutionally dismissed and Khan Abdul Qayum was asked to form the ministry with the support of only seventeen members. This was the start of the newly born country. They had to go a long way ahead for their rights and constitutional governance.

When Pakistan came into being, most of the Pakhtuns were happy to have a new country, where there would be rule of law and they would enjoy constitutional governance, and freedom and democracy. They tolerated the first undemocratic and unlawful step, understanding that the new state was aiming for democratic practices as the founder of the nation promised in his speeches. The Pakhtuns in opposition cooperated with the government. The staunch opponent of the partition of India and leader of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, Bacha Khan made a speech in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly after taking oath of allegiance as a member in March 1948. On 5th March 1948, Bacha Khan in his maiden speech said that when Pakistan had come into existence, the old disputes were over even though he had been against the partition of India. However, the ruling Muslim League

⁴¹ Khan Abdul Jabbar Khan (1882-1958) popularly known as Dr. Khan Sahib.

leaders created misunderstandings between Qaid-i-Azam and Bacha Khan through palace intrigues, particularly by the Muslim League leaders of the NWFP. This campaign was carried on by State-controlled media and through the pseudo-intellectuals and continued until recent times. For example, Syed Abdul Quddus writes in his book "The Pakhtuns":

"Dr. Khan Sahib, who was the Chief Minister of the province at the time, refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new state of Pakistan, of which the Frontier province was now a part, and his brother Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan continued to agitate desperately for Pakhtunistan. Both of them were convicted of disloyalty and imprisoned by the Pakistan Government. The Frontier province elected a new government, which by its policies and achievements proved to be more patriotic than any foreign observer could have expected."⁴²

Syed Abdul Quddus does not mention the court of law in which they were tried and sentenced and nor the elections through which the new government was elected, while the fact is that Abdul Ghaffar Khan had taken the oath in 1948 and Dr. Khan Sahib served the new State of Pakistan as its Chief Minister during the 'one unit' time when West and East were united. Khan Abdul Wali Khan once raised the question like this:

"A very simple but most pertinent question can be asked—What is there in Pakistan that Qayyum Khan has accepted which Abdul Ghaffar Khan has not?"

Bacha Khan and his party continued their struggle for democratic and constitutional governance in the Province, but the then leader of the Muslim League and Chief Minister, Khan Abdul Qayum Khan, dictatorially blocked

⁴² *The Pathans*, Syed Abdul Quddus, published by Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., 1987 Lahore, page 233.

every way for them. Peaceful demonstrations of the Red Shirts were fired upon and hundreds of innocent people were killed by the police. The leaders were arrested, and put behind bars. Their movable and immovable property was confiscated.

Bacha Khan formed a political Party under which the Khudai Khidmatgars and Red Shirts continued their struggle for democracy and civil rights, but were not allowed to struggle for their constitutional and democratic privileges. Because of their previous affiliation with Congress, they were called traitors and were denied a part in the mainstream of Pakistan politics. This behavior of the ruling Muslim League forced them to either quit politics or go into exile in neighboring Afghanistan. Bacha Khan ultimately migrated to Afghanistan and spent the rest of his life in exile. He only returned to Pakistan when Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Bacha Khan offered the Prime Minister his support, but it was rejected.

The struggle for democracy and civil rights of Pakhtuns in particular and the people of Pakistan in general was now the responsibility of the successors of Bacha Khan. Wali Khan became the political heir of his father who, along with the progressive Pakistani political personalities and an alliance of other parties, formed the National Awami Party (NAP). The parties which merged into a single party which could claim to have a national character were the Azad Pakistan Party from the Punjab, led by Mian Iftikhar ud Din, and Mian Mahmud A.H. Qasuri; the Sind Mahaz, led by Mr. G. M. Syed and Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi; the Sindh Hari Committee, led by Mr. Haider Bakhsh Jatui; the Wror Pakhtun of Baluchistan, led by Abdul Samad Achakzai, and Muhammad Hashim Ghilzai; the Usthman Gul, also of Baluchistan, led by Shahzada Abdul Karim, and Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizanjo; and Khudai Khidmatgar from the NWFP, led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

The new NAP party worked for the restoration of democracy and struggled against the One Unit, because it was causing the East to stand against the West. The party was banned, but only the Pakhtun leaders were

sent to jail and termed as traitors. This attitude of the government towards Pakhtuns pushed them together under nationalist leadership.

Its president was Mawlana Bashani (1880-1976) of the then East Pakistan. Along with the leaders of the oppressed people of other provinces, Wali Khan continued his struggle for provincial autonomy and the rule of democracy under this party. The result was his confinement to jail for a long time. Pakhtuns under his political leadership struggled hard for the restoration of democracy and other human rights in the province, while the Pakhtuns of Baluchistan were united under the leadership of Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai (1907-1973), the old companion of Bacha Khan, for the same purpose. During the ten long years of Field Marshal Ayub Khan's rule,⁴³ these leaders spent most of their lives in jail as prisoners of conscience. After Ayub Khan, came another army general, Yahya Khan⁴⁴ and Pakistan disintegrated further because power was not given to the winning party in the general elections. East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the prime minister of the remaining West Pakistan.⁴⁵ Though Bhutto restored democracy in the early days of his premiership and lifted the ban from the NAP, at last he too became intoxicated by power and started fascist tactics to prolong his rule. This resulted in a country wide agitation and the Pakhtuns were again in the forefront of this movement. Mr. Bhutto banned the National Awami Party and put Wali Khan and his companions behind bars. They were tried for treason and a special tribunal was formed to punish them for their crime of raising their voices for democratic rule. Many Pakhtuns migrated to Afghanistan while others were united under the leadership of Mrs. Nasim

⁴³ Muhammad Ayub Khan (1907-1974) was the second President of Pakistan (1958-1969).

⁴⁴ Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan (1917-1980) was the third President of Pakistan from 1969 to 1971, following the resignation of Ayub Khan.

⁴⁵ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979) was the fourth President of Pakistan from 1971 to 1973, and the ninth Prime Minister from 1973 to 1977. He was the founder of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Wali Khan who formed another political party, the National Democratic Party (NDP). The party struggled along with the other political parties of Pakistan and Mr. Bhutto was dismissed as prime minister by the intervention of the army, and was ultimately hanged. Now the problem was how to get rid of the army general once more.

When the then USSR invaded Afghanistan (December 1979) and a new era of struggle started for the independence of the Afghans from Russian occupation. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan directly affected Pakistan: its political atmosphere in general and Pakhtuns' political and socio-economic condition in particular. Pakhtuns were both struggling for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and helping the Afghan Mujahideen to free their country. But they were more concerned about the politics in Pakistan. General Zia ul Haq⁴⁶ in a way had obliged them by freeing their leaders from jail and also some other acts of the general were acceptable to them as compared to the rule of Z. A. Bhutto. All the exiled leaders and intellectuals were allowed to return to the country and false criminal cases registered against them by Bhutto were withdrawn. This was the reason that they did not resist the army rule in the early days, but when Zia ul Haq tried to discourage the political process and held non party elections to prolong his martial law, then once again the Pakhtuns rose to resist and started a movement for human, political and civil rights. The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) was formed in 1981 which was a national political movement but was mostly led by Pakhtuns.

Zia was followed by the interim government of Ghulam Ishaq Khan⁴⁷ who was a Pakhtun and he held general elections according to constitutional obligations. Benazir Bhutto⁴⁸ became the Prime Minister of Pakistan,

⁴⁶ General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1924-1988) was the sixth President of Pakistan from July 1977 to his death in August 1988.

⁴⁷ Ghulam Ishaq Khan (1915-2006) was the seventh President of Pakistan from 1988-1993.

⁴⁸ Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007) was twice Prime Minister of Pakistan (1988-1990 and 1993-1996).

achieving a majority of seats in the national assembly. She was supported by the Pakhtuns which also was the case with Mr. Nawaz Sharif.⁴⁹ Both the governments were dismissed by the President due to corruption and malpractice of governance and once again martial law was promulgated in the country. In October 1999, General Musharraf⁵⁰ became the chief executive of the country. In the capacity of President and got himself elected through the king party, the Muslim League. After becoming President, General Musharraf also became power intoxicated and could not tolerate any other authority in the country. When some of his undemocratic and unlawful acts were challenged and annulled through the suo moto action of the Chief Justice Mr. Iftikhar Chaudhary a new judicial crisis erupted in the country, especially when President Musharraf deposed the Chief Justice through a presidential order. Because of the way the Chief Justice was treated and threatened by the government, a very strong wave of unrest was created among the legal community of the country.

It is worth noting that most of the present day lawyers of the courts are former students and student leaders who had always risen against dictatorial governance in the country. Among the Pakhtun student leaders, the former presidents of the Khyber Union are worth mentioning, as they have led the student community in demonstrations against dictatorial conditions. One former president of the Khyber Union of Islamia College University of Peshawar was Dr. Ashraf Adeel who had always taken serious and strong notice of undemocratic norms anywhere. As a teacher of the University of Peshawar Dr. Adeel has played a very effective role in resistance movements of this sort. Through the platform of the Peshawar University Teachers Association (PUTA), Dr. Ashraf Adeel always raised his voice very strongly on all occasions. Mr. Afrasiab Khattak is the other example of a student leader who is now leading a Pakhtun nationalist Party in Pakistan. Qazi

⁴⁹ Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif (born 1949) was twice elected as Prime Minister of Pakistan (1990-1993 and 1997-1999).

⁵⁰ General Pervez Musharraf (born 1943), was the tenth President of Pakistan (2001-2008).

Anwer is a Pakhtun lawyer who has very actively taken part in these kinds of movements. Mr. Latif Afridi, a Pakhtun lawyer and nationalist leader, led the lawyers of the NWFP to the extent that he stood in front of a police tank while the police tried to stop the lawyers' demonstration and his legs were broken by the police car running over him. The courage shown by Mr. Latif Afridi refreshed the memory of the resistance of Bacha Khan against the British in the freedom movement in which his ribs were broken by the police who kicked him in the chest at Mir Wais Ghundai.

During the agitation of the legal community of Pakistan against the dismissal of the Chief Justice, the continuity of demonstrations was at its highest in the lawyers of the Pakhtuns. After the house-arrest of Mr. Ahtizaz Ahsan, the struggle in other provinces of Pakistan had almost come to a standstill, while the demonstrations in NWFP had kept going on under the leadership Qazi Anwer Advocate and Barrister Bacha, another former President of the Khyber Union, Islamia College.

Political awareness among the Pakhtuns is greater, when compared to the rest of the provinces of the country. This may be because of the long history of their struggle for independence and their attachment to the political forces that have been fighting for provincial autonomy. In 1970 they were the only people who supported Sheikh Mujeeb ur Rahman of the Awami League, whose party had the majority of seats in the general elections and who wanted to call the meeting of its first session in Dhaka. When Mr. Bhutto threatened to break the legs of all members of all the political parties who went to that meeting, only the Pakhtuns nationalist groups dared to go to Dhaka to recognize the majority party. This act of the Pakhtun nationalists was termed as treachery on their part at that time, but when the country disintegrated in the process, then that step was termed right by political analysts.

When Mr. Bhutto became the civilian chief martial law administrator of the rest of Pakistan, it was strongly opposed by the Pakhtuns; however in the process they ultimately joined the mainstream of political activity. After the

lifting of martial law, the NAP and the The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Assembly of Islamic Clergy or JUI) formed coalition governments in the two provinces as they were the majority parties. Mawlana Mufti Mehmood became the Chief Minister of the NWFP, but although he had the majority in the House he resigned his office when the elected government in Baluchistan was removed and Governor's rule was imposed for no solid reason. Mufti Mehmood resigned as a protest against this undemocratic step of the Federal Government

The Pakhtuns were in stark opposition to the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Government, but cooperated with it voluntarily when the draft of the constitution was presented in the House. They voted in favour of the new constitution and for the first time the country was given a true democratic constitution which later on changed through so many amendments in the Assembly. Voices against these unjustified amendments were raised by the Pakhtuns along with other political forces.

Pakhtuns have played a pivotal role in the politics of Pakistan. In all the movements for democracy in Pakistan, the Pakhtuns have remained in the forefront of these struggles. It is the third largest province of the country, but its people have a vigilant political sense and intellect, and that's why throughout the history of Pakistani politics, only the Pakhtuns have remained in opposition because they believe in ideological politics while the rest of the parties play politics for power and to win elections alone. The process is still going on and whenever there is some undoing of the democratic process in Pakistan, the first to rise against it are often the Pakhtuns who would never compromise on constitutional governance and rule of law.

In the recent past agitating lawyers in black coats proved their authority and stand on truth and justice. The lawyers' movement was the first blow which shook the presidency of the ever-strong President Musharraf. It started on 9th March, 2007 and reached its apex a year later. The force of this movement was felt across the world. When the Chief Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhary was removed from his

position through a presidential reference, the whole Pakistani nation stood behind the iron-strong leadership of lawyers, and spoke against President Musharraf. In this movement, Pakhtun lawyers from the Frontier were always on the frontline. To name a few, Qazi Anwar, Barrister Bacha, Latif Afridi and Athar Minallah are the leading Pakhtun lawyers from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who rallied across the country to speak for justice and put an end to the rule of injustice and the dictatorial era. They pulled together hundreds of lawyers and thousands of people behind them to register their protest. They boycotted the court proceedings and held protest demonstrations until the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary was restored on his position. However, on 3rd November 2007, once again when the Chief Justice was removed and the constitution suspended, the lawyers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa came on to the streets, this time with more power and with the support of the political parties. The nation, which mistrusted the leadership of politicians, united together under the vibrant leadership of lawyers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These lawyers not only boycotted the courts and agitated in the streets but also provided legal assistance to the deposed Chief Justice Iftikhar. Initially it was Qazi Anwar who assisted the lawyer's team to reinstate him on his position, followed by Athar Minallah who defended the case of Justice Iftikhar along with a group of lawyers.

Despite a strong crackdown by the government on lawyers, they didn't budge even an inch from their position. The lawyers' Pakhtun leaders, Qazi Anwar and Barrister Bacha, were put under house-arrest, and Latif Afridi (tribal leader and veteran lawyer) was beaten during a rally. But none of them and their hundreds of thousands of other colleagues and supporters could be distracted from their strong determination. It was these continuous agitations of the lawyers which compelled Musharraf not only to remove his military uniform but also to sort out a conciliatory deal with the politicians—even opponents like Nawaz and Benazir. It was the first time Musharraf had bowed down before the relentless pressure of the lawyers. Media, politicians, civil society and youth provided full support to this movement. President Musharraf had no way other than to conduct free and fair elections in the country.

The people cast their vote in support of an independent judiciary in the country and outrightly rejected pro-Musharraf political parties. Due to the relentless campaign of lawyers, the pro-Musharraf parties and politicians in the NWFP were thrown out of parliament through polling. The lawyers' movement in the Frontier demanded no less than the resignation of President Musharraf and restoration of judiciary to pre-November 3rd positions. If we saw the rise of the ANP, PPP or Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, one major reason was that the lawyers' movements gave them new life and energized them with a right cause and a stand for the independence of the judiciary and the struggle for democracy.

Sometimes the lawyers committed unparliamentary acts. Mr. Khurshid Khan Advocate, a former President of Peshawar University Students Union, sprayed black paint on the face of Ahmad Raza Qasuri, who was siding with the government and pleading its case in the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the case of the Chief Justice Mr. Iftikhar Chaudhary. Blackening of the face is highly shameful for a person in Pakhtun culture. (A shameful act metaphorically is called 'the blackening of one's face'.) The siding of Ahmad Raza Qasuri with the government was a shameful act in the mind of Mr. Khurshid Khan so he dared to spray black on his face. This act of his is in no way desirable and to some extent condemnable too, yet this unique way of recording protest against that undemocratic step of the government was adopted. Mr. Khurshid suffered a lot because of this act. He was arrested and tortured by the police, but he stated that he was satisfied with what he did.

Pakhtuns have always struggled for the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in the country. Whenever a situation arises, the Pakhtuns rise first against it. They struggled hard for the restoration of the dismissed judges of the Supreme Court. For example, when the protest rallies of the lawyers in the rest of the country stopped, the lawyers of the Peshawar High court Bar Association carried out daily protest rallies in Peshawar and demonstrated until the judges were finally restored on 16th March, 2009.

The Mawlana and Ishq (Love)

رسید مژده بشام است شمس تبریزی
چه صبح ها بنماید اگر بشام بود

The news has come! Shams-i Tabriz is in Damascus.

If he is in Damascus, what morning will appear?⁵¹

Mawlana Jalaluddin Balkhi, commonly known by the name of Mawlana Rum (or Rumi), has become a symbol of mystic love, and has attained the highest status in the type of love which only a few fortunate people can be said to have attained. This forerunner of lovers was born in the Balkh province of Afghanistan. Balkh is the most notable place in the history of human civilization. It was an ancient Aryan city, called the cradle of culture and civilization. It was also the city of Zoroaster who preached the dual concept of good and evil as the basis of his religion.

According to Rumi, the purity of goodness was alloyed with the dross of evil. This gold of goodness could only be purified with the sanctity of fire. Fire has the elements of both good and evil. In poetic symbolism this fire can be called the basic means or agent of the alchemy of the body. Fire also has many other properties but its basic property is heat. This heat is the basic agent or engine of the movement of life. Along with many other things, an alchemist first of all needs fire. The purpose of this alchemy is the purification of the soul. In order to establish balance or equilibrium between

⁵¹ Shams-i-Tabrizi or Shams al-Din Mohammad (d. c. 1248) is recognized as the spiritual instructor of the poet Rumi (full name Mawlana Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi). Rumi refers to Shams with great respect in his poetic collection, especially *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrizi* (The Works of Shams of Tabriz).

the body and the soul, the *murshid* (Sufi saint or guide) first of all cleans the *nafs* (the carnal self) of the *murid* or *salik* (student or initiate) with fire to remove all the dross from it exactly like an alchemist who burns away the dross from the raw gold or gold ore. Similarly, the soul is purified of all blemishes with the fire of love, so that the evolutionary stages of the attainment of the necessary purification are crossed step by step:

"Everything in the universe has evolved; gold is the metal that has evolved the furthest".

That fire lit by Zoroaster in the fire temple of "Nowbahar" has been kept alight to this day by the devotees of fire. It has kept inspiring man in every age and this honour goes to Balkh. The Kushans selected Balkh for the propagation of the Buddhism. They found suitable and conducive conditions there. With the advent of Islam in Central Asia, perhaps the Muslims also found suitable environment in Balkh for spiritual progress. Mazar-i-Sharif bear witness to this fact.

Mawlana Jalaluddin Balkhi was born in such a surrounding, and perhaps nature had also intended that a mysticism or mystic creed based on love should have its origin and propagation from there. Love teaches man how to turn the dust of human body into pure gold. Love is the acme of human potential and attainment. It prepares man for stepping on the throne and the chair. In the words of Rahman Baba,

و اسمان ته لاس د عقل نه رسېږي
داخو عشق د ځي په عرش کړسي قدم ږدي

The hand of intellect cannot reach heaven

It is love that steps on the *arsh* (throne) and the chair.

Love is the basic creed of the Sufi way of life. Love is the deepest human experience, and almost all human beings experience love in one way

or another. For some, like Sufis it is the climax of human experience, while for other it is one among the many experiences of life. Poet philosopher Mohammad Iqbal (1877 – 1938) is of the opinion that, *ishq* (love) is that power which can resolve those mysteries in one's life that defy rational understanding. He is right, because the immensity of love cannot be comprehended in any formal logic or utilitarian rational calculus. *ishq* is like a touchstone, which transforms raw metal in to gold.

The philosopher's stone or touchstone that turns the base body into purified gold can be found in just one look of the beloved, as a Pashto *tappa* says;

ستا په نظر خاورې زر کېږي
ماته که وگورې د سرو زرو به شمه

With your countenance, clay is transformed into gold
If you gaze at me, I will become gold.

Iqbal too refers to this sight of the beloved and has said,

تیرا علاج اک نظر کے سوا کچھ بھی نہیں

You need just one look of the beloved; your treatment lies nowhere else.

Jalaluddin Balkhi was fortunate to find this philosopher's stone in the gaze of Shams-i Tabriz; otherwise the path of logic and philosophy that he was following like Plato and Aristotle before him, could have also taken him to the pinnacle of unity or ultimate union with reality. As nature had moulded him into a genius, he realized that this journey could not be carried on the light of intellect alone; he also needed the shoes of fire of love for it. Abdul Hameed Momand says in this regard,

کہ می کرې لبو نتوب رهبري نه وے
افلاطون غوندې به مړومه گمراه

Had the love (madness) not led me
I would have gone distracted like Plato

And as nature had perhaps intended the selection and perfection of a typical infallible guide in the way of love, Mawlana Rum was made the well-spring of love and wisdom. Love itself is a great wisdom, rather a well-spring of wisdom.

As the body attains perfection in three stages, love similarly has three stages. One is the raw form which is realized in tandem with sexual desire, and as such is a mere mundane or metaphorical, unreal self which is engendered by beauty or human attractiveness. Although love itself creates beauty, here the possession of beauty is intended. The point here is the possession of a beloved with his / her consent. The force behind the sensuous love is actually the force or attraction or the pull of beauty. This attraction compels a stern king like Babar to helplessly blush in front of an ordinary boy, Babary. Similarly the love between Sarmad Shahid and Abayi Chand turns into a timeless romance, and in the Ayaz and Mehmood legend, the king turns into the slave of a slave, similarly, in the higher selfless degree the same love is seen at another level among lovers like Lyla and Majnoon, Sherin and Farhad and Adam Durkho, etc.

It all depends on one's patience and forbearance. Those who can bear the heat of the fire of reality, like the Mawlana, can attain the eternal union in the love of Shams-i-Tabriz. He loves his own ego in the ego of the beloved. The 'You' and 'I' of the two bodies are merged in one soul from where begins the point of eternal union. As Rumi wrote,

One went to the door of the beloved and knocked

A voice came, "who is there?"

He answered, "It is I"

The voice said, "There is no room for me and Thee"

The door was shut.

After a year of solitude and deprivation he returned and knocked.

A voice from within asked, "Who is there?"

The man said, "It is Thee."

The door was opened for him.

But this has more possibility for the adepts in Islamic *Tassawuf*. Love can be said to have many dimensions. One can find its traces in every mystic path or order. Guru Rajnesh says about love:

"Love is a light. It is the scent or fragrance of self-realization. Love is a pleasure or rapture and a fragrance or scent. You see yourself as what you actually are. Then you see yourself that virtually do nothing except portioning yourself out among others. Love implies the realization of no separation from the universal being."

But all such creeds are somehow alloyed with sensuousness.

The love that Mawlana Jalaluddin Balkhi has experienced, though it is related to inner state (*hāl*) and cannot be expressed in words. However, the way he has tried to express these impressions in a typical style can be seen in masterpieces: The *Mathnavi* and *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*. It is such a powerful account of the meeting and separation in love that only a poet like the Mawlana could express it. And this poetic vision or power can also be said to have been bestowed upon him by his love. From the very first verse of the *Mathnavi* we hear the plaint of separation;

بشنوا زنی چون حکایت میکند
وزجد ائیهها شکایت میکند

Listen to the flute. What story it relates

It complains against separation

Here the creed can be taken for the metaphor for the human soul which is pure and refulgent. It is a property of the being of God and in its pristine purity; it is free from the defects of all worldly impurities. But when man was born in this world, he was surrounded by the dross or dirt of evil. That is why the soul complains against the separation from its original reality. But the dross of the human body is now being purified by the mystics and enables it to retain or regain its original purity and union with its maker and leave back all the cares and worries of world which is a drag on its essential freedom.

Mawlana Rum's conception of this love can be seen in his *Mathnavi*. His own love experiences are depicted in *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*. One can hear the echoes of all the states from where the Mawlana has passed in his spiritual journey. But more often, what he wants to say, he fails to express it in words. Then in sheer desperation he condemns himself and what he wants to say;

خاک بر من و بر تمثیل من

Dust on me and what I say

Mystics are born twice or three times over. Sultan Walad writes that a man is born twice: once born from his mother's womb and then born from his own being. In this way the Mawlana can be said to have three births. His first birth was that of a saintly scholar; his second birth was in the love of Shams-i-Tabriz, and his third birth was his ultimate union with reality. It is

this third birth that has become his true identity as a lover. Arasteh writes;

"To become fully integrated personally means to complete the circle of existence. From conception the individual passes through birth, socialization, enculturation, specialization, an awareness of his ego, objectification of the ego, realization of the role of culture, perception of creation, perception of man in cosmic evolution, the unfolding of unconsciousness and finally the attainment of a state of conscious existence. One who desires to become a mature man must be born again and again and experience numerous spiritual rebirths."⁵²

Abdul Hameed Baba says:

خه د سرو هلو ويره بنځي ماته
لکه شمع تازه کېږم په بل بل سر

Why warn me of the fear of cutting my head
Like a candle I become renewed every other instant

Mawlana Rum has suggested perfect love in the light of his own experiences in love. The basic subject of his *Mathnavi* is love. Love is possible and can be expressed in many objects or even abstract concepts. It is also possible to love God, but the poverty and clumsiness of language cannot cope with the refinement of that expression.

The eternity of soul, leaving behind time and space, has been expressed in numerous places in the *Mathnavi*. The universe was not there before there was the human soul. According to the *Mathnavi*, there is nothing but souls in the universe. God is the soul of souls; the originator of unlimited souls. He is

⁵² Rumi, A.Reza Arasteh.

the antecedent of body. These souls are at the same time attached to God and also separate from Him. But this separation is not reality. It is neither temporal nor special, nor intellectual nor intuitive. The Mawlana has reached this conclusion by dint of his love.

The mutual relationship between love and intellect is a critical issue. According to the Holy Quran, wisdom is the greatest good. Contemplating the creation of God is also a form of prominent worship. That is why a scholar is superior to a worshipper. The Mawlana's concept of intellect and wisdom is much deeper than that of the philosophers. The wisdom in science and philosophy is considered partial wisdom by the Mawlana. A major subject of the *Mathnavi* is the helplessness and insufficiency of intellect. The Mawlana extols the absolute intellect and the discernment of wisdom. R. A. Nicholson writes in his introduction to the *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*:

"The advanced and uncompromising Sufism taught by Jalaluddin Balkhi makes ethics subservient to philosophy. Virtue, as he conceives it, is not an end, but a means: the end is union with God through Love. Thus his poetry is based on a transcendental pantheism, which however he works out from the moral, not the metaphysical, stand point."⁵³

Khushal Baba Says:

عقل سل د مصلحت بندونه جوړ کړي
چې د عشق سېلاب پرې راشي واره نور کړي

The intellect makes a hundred dams
But the flood of love washes them all away

⁵³ *Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, edited and translated by R. A. Nicholson, first published 1898.

The love that the Mawlana describes is not a mere condition of impressions. What is called love with reference to the body is mere excitement. The Mawlana calls his own condition not a mere sensuous impression. In divine love, impression, perception, wisdom and rapture are all there at once. The first stage of love is the purification of the self. The heart is relieved from lower impressions with the help of the purification and turned into a mirror of reality. Physical love blinds a man while spiritual love provides eyesight. The heart start reflecting or refracting such Divine experiences which are beyond the comprehension of the senses or intellect. Without love, knowledge is mere conjecture that stands on a strong foundation of logic and tumbles down with an equally strong blow of counter logic. It always has an element of conjecture and uncertainty. Love, however, demands that the lover gives up personal desires and gratify the desires of the beloved.

عقل عاشق ز علت هاجداست

عشق اصطربا اسرار خداست

The condition of love is different from other conditions

Love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God

These states of exposure of love and cognizance are higher and beyond perceptual realization. Those who know it don't need any explanation of it, but for those who have not experienced it, there is no way of explaining it to them.

چلیپا و نصرانیان سر به سر بیوئیدم اندر چلیپا نبود
به بتخانه رفتم به دیر کهن درو هیچ رنگی هویدا نبود
به کوه هرا رفتم و قندهار بدیدم در آن زیرو بالا نبود
بعمد اشدم بر سر کوه قاف در آن جای جز جای عنقا نبود

بکعبه کشیدم عنان طلب در آن مقصد پیرو برنا نبود
پرسیدم از ابن سینا حال بر اندازه ابن سینا نبود
سوئی منظر قاب قوسین شدم در آن بارگاه معلّا نبود
نگاه کردم اندر دل خویشان در آن جاش دیدم دگر جان بود

Cross and Christians, from end to end,

I surveyed; He was not on the cross.

I went to the idol-temple, to the ancient pagoda;

No trace was visible there.

I went to the mountains of Herat and Kandahar;

I looked; he was not in that hill and dale.

With set purpose I fared to the summit of Mount Qaf.

In that place was only Anqa's habitation.

I bent the reins of search to the Ka'ba;

He was not in that resort of Old and Young.

I questioned Ibn Sina's of His state;

He was not within Ibn Sina's range,

I fared towards the scene of two bow-lengths distance,

He was not in that exalted court

I gazed into my heart;

There I saw Him; He was nowhere else.

Physical existence has many separate stages. One is social existence which ties man to a society. This society is an extension of family or tribal

traditions. Another is cultural existence which is bound by cultural and religious customs and traditions. Another is the existence of personal wisdom which is concerned with knowledge, philosophy and logic. In this way existence has scattered elements. These scattered elements are collected and actuated by the consciousness of an ideal existence. This is done with the help of mystic concentration. Hamza Shinwari wrote,

حسن خود ے یو خو پہ بار بار چہی مٹنہ پر
دا د خیل و جود خو ارۂ اجزاء را تہولوم

Beauty is one and the same, but falling in love again and again,
I am bringing together the dispersed elements of my own self.

From here the perfection of ego appears - the ego whose philosophy has been systematically expounded by Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal. With the consciousness of this ego, one finds one's real existence or essence. This essence is a part of the essence that is dispersed in the universe but is imperceptible. When this essence finds its reflection in another similar essence, it gives birth to ideal love or the meeting of beauty and love. Probably the real destination of man is the attainment of this essence of existence. When the Mawlana experienced the existence of reality in his soul, he observed real or absolute beauty and attained that state of love which is beyond the reach of intellect. The rapture that he felt by coming out of the traditional or cultural self, it was the mirror of the beauty of the body or self of Shams-i Tabrizi. In this mirror he saw the flash which blinded him to his own traditional existence. He absorbed or concentrated his own identity in the essence of Shams-i Tabrizi. In this way he reached the state of unity in diversity and found the mystery of the pantheism where you and I don't exist. In this way the door of beauty and union with it was opened for him.

بیا بیا کہ نیابی چوما دگر یاری
چوما بجملہ جہان خود کجاست دلداری

بیا بیا وبہر سوی روزگار مبر
کہ نیست نقد ترا پیش غیر بازاری
تو ہمچو واریء خشکی و ما چو بارانی
تو ہمچو شہر خرابی و ما چو معاری

Come, come, for you will not find another friend like me:

Where indeed is a Beloved like me in the entire world?

Come, come, and do not spend your life in wandering to and fro,
since there is no market elsewhere for your money.

You are as a dry valley and I as the rain,

You are as a ruined city and I as the architect.



Hamza Shinwari (1907-1994):

A Biographical Sketch

In the history of the Khyber Pass one discovers that grand chapter of the history of Asia in which countless events of earth-shaking dimensions have occurred in the wake of the fluctuating fortunes of great monarchs and conquerors. In the words of the late Hafiz Jalandari (1900-1982),

"Neither grass grows, there neither blossom flowers,
yet the sky stoops to the earth there"

Or, as Hamza Shinwari would look at it,

"In the throat of India, it is the guiding rope of the Afghan camel; this
(Pass) is the jugular vein in the neck of Hindustan".

The shadows of the Khyber Pass can at times be traced from the Oxus to Jamuna. This historic Pass is a romantic symbol through which march literally a thousand *dāstāns* (stories). Every *dāstān* is an indelible story of the rise and fall of nations, a kaleidoscopic diary of conquerors from the shores of Caspian to the archipelago of Indonesia. It has its own geographical preponderance. Its rolling peaks in the heart of Central Asia, seen in their historical perspective, bring to mind the awesome grandeur of the Himalayas. On this Pass hinges the history of Central Asia, due to a curious geopolitical coincidence.

Tatara is a famous peak in this Pass like a bright constellation for the entire Pakhtunkhwa. This peak is visible from the entire Peshawar valley, as if presiding majestically over the fierce surrounding hills. Every Pakhtun,

whether consciously or unconsciously, considers Tatara to be a symbol of national pride. The peak still sings of this pride with multiple silent tongues, with stony disdain to the petty conquerors of yore.

When the inexorable chain of historical events reached the twentieth century, the great Pashto critic and historian, the late Momand declared that from now on the Khyber Pass would be known in an entirely different capacity. The new identity of this famous old Pass was to be the "King of *Ghazals*", Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari, not because he conquered it anew, but because it had given him birth and nourished him with its maternal love and filial care. Previously this Pass had military significance, now it will have literary preponderance. Previously it was a den of *dacoits* and bandits and a haven for outlaws and outcasts, now it will be the hub of a literary movement that will cast its long shadow over the very distant future.

Thus far, the Khyber Pass has been known in its role as the Gateway to India through which poured in the Aryans from the arid plains of Central Asia to the fertile soil of India. They were followed by a medley of races trudging up and down the Central Asian highway, all converging on the Khyber. The Parthians, the Scythians, the Huns, the Sakas, the Kushans, the Greeks, the Tartars and the Mughals all had their weary traffic through it. The British straddled it on their way to Kabul. Later they also zealously fortified it with ugly symbols of war called "pickets". With the Russian encroachment in Afghanistan; the Khyber was once again astir with strings of refugees and caravans of arms and ammunition. Occasionally it resounded with the echoes of exploding scuds and missiles fired from across the Durand Line.

But at the dawn of the twentieth century, this Pass gave birth to Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari, a poet and intellectual par excellence, the echoes of whose sweet and melodious songs against this harsh, craggy background will vibrate through the coming centuries. It may present a surprising contrast for the rest of the civilized world to look at the delicacy and refinement of Hamza Shinwari's poetry against the stormy, volatile nature of the Pakhtuns moulded by a correspondingly rough and cruel physical nature.

The vision or dream that Khushal Khan Khattak had three hundred years ago, found fulfilment in the twentieth century in Hamza Shinwari. He was born in Landikotal in 1907 in the Asraf Khel clan in the house of Malik Bazmir Khan. He had three elder brothers, Balk M Khan, Yar Mohammad Khan and Bawar Khan and one younger brother Mohammad Qamar Khan. His family was already famous for the observance of Pakhtun traditions together with freedom of thought and action. Bawar Khan was a handsome man and a legendary player of the *rabāb*. Since Hamza Shinwari's parents had passed away while he was still a child, he was brought up by his elder brother, Bawar Khan, who also taught him to play the *rabāb*.

He was admitted to a local primary school, when he was six years old. Since he had an inborn artistic urge, one day he started drawing figures on his small wooden board instead of his A, B, C. as had been directed by the teacher. When he showed his work, the teacher gave him such a severe thrashing for this impertinence that from that day he gave up school altogether. Instead, he would go to the nearby graveyard and sit by his mother's grave all day and at the end of school he would also go back home, like all the other boys, with clay dust on his face. When his continuous absence from school was reported, his elder brother had him admitted to Islamia Collegiate School in Peshawar, putting him in the hostel there. Even though he was miserable there, he persevered through to the tenth class, when he finally called it a day, without appearing in the matriculation examination.

As a young man Hamza assisted his elder brother in his contract work on Landikotal to Torkham Road. It may be interesting to mention that Bacha Saqa, whose real name was Habibullah, the famous *dacoit* who deposed Amanullah Khan to take the Afghan throne for a brief interval, used to supply water for this contract work, before his desperate exploits in Afghanistan. His royal trappings did not make him forget his Shinwari masters for when he became the King of Afghanistan, in his own daredevil way, he sent for the family of Hamza on the understanding that they be granted *jagirs* and high office in his vast kingdom. Hamza, however, wrote to him that since his

position was too shaky to withstand the buffeting of the intransigent Afghan tribes, it would be better for him to come back to his honourable, and reasonably lucrative job of water supply to the contract work. He would be given fresh water skins.

One day he was told that a labourer on the contract work was a poet, composing good, extempore *chārbetas* (poems). For Hamza there appeared nothing unusual that someone should write poetry. However, he thought he could write better poetry extempore, and there and then he wrote a *chārbeta* or two. He then believed that any literate person could write poetry as if poetry was but an extension of his 'normal' writing ability and no more. At that time, he had not taken to writing Pashto poetry, although he had written the occasional *ghazal* in Urdu. The first Pashto *diwān* that he read was that of Khushal Khan Khattak which left a lasting imprint on his supple mind.

Then nature or providence provided him with an environment which was fragrant with *tassawaf*, *tarikāt*, literature, music and poetry. Firstly, Qayamuddin Khadim had been teaching in a mosque and madrasa in Landikotal. Secondly, his family was spiritually attached to Syed Abdul Sattar Shah who also became Hamza Shinwari's *murshid* (spiritual guide), leaving an indelible mark on his life and thoughts.

In the early poetry of Hamza Shinwari there is a deep pathos, a melancholy restlessness. This seems to have been caused by an intense feeling of unfulfilled love. Associated with this sense of total deprivation were two important events in his life. The one was his love marriage and the other was his spiritual attachment to Syed Abdul Sattar Shah. The death of his beloved wife, after a few years, gave such a severe jolt to his sentient emotions that their tremors could be felt in most of his subsequent poetry. However his *murshid* channelled his poetic sensibilities and successfully put him on the road to composing proper Pashto poetry.

With this Hamza wrote Pashto *ghazals* giving them such a positive local colour that it can be said he successfully revived once again the movement

that Khushal Khan Khattak had started three hundred years ago. The centuries-old *ghazal*, which had quietly slipped into a purely Persian idiom after Khushal Khan, was once again remoulded into Pashto diction and spirit. Hamza Shinwari is the first poet who founded this new *ghazal* in Pashto. He came out with new and fresh themes, symbols, idioms and a totally indigenous environment, scrupulously avoiding alien, cumbersome imitations and affectations. Even the universal philosophy of *tassawuf* or mysticism was given a local colour and presented in a typically Pakhtun fashion. This new approach to *tassawuf* did not require the Sufi to discard his sabre or the crested turban in favour of the traditional string of rosary or the patch-frock with a matching cap. His national or tribal pride was not allowed to be swamped by even this all-embracing doctrine. That is why even his *tassawuf* is referred to as a "*Pakhtun Tassawuf*".

The adherents of Sufism were pushed, into caves or confined to monasteries by the devastating events in Central Asia in the wake of the Tartar conquests. As a result, both Sufism and literature were left with the philosophy of renunciation, resignation and escapism, a defeatist mentality that divorced them from the realities and strife of daily life. Life was reduced to a mere transitory affair on a meaningless plane. However, Hamza once again tried to relate *tassawuf* to practical life, seeing *fiqr* and *ishq* in a new light and giving them a new and practical significance.

Hamza can be looked upon as a milestone in the march of the classical *ghazal* to perfection. On the one hand he is the last link of the chain of the classical *ghazal* while on the other hand he has also ushered in the modern Pashto *ghazal*. The modern *ghazal* starts with Hamza as with him ends the medieval *ghazal*. In this sense, he can be called a bridge between modern and medieval Pashto poetry. In this way he is also a leader of modern Pashto poetry.

In the beginning when Hamza wrote in his typical style he was found rather difficult to readily comprehend, but when the younger generation became acquainted with his style and the school of thought that was revolving

around, him, he was gradually taken for a model and a standard. The Olasi Adabi *Jirga* which was established in 1950 and of which he was permanent president was also responsible for the dissemination and popularisation of his style. This *jirga* was established by the greatest contemporary intellectuals, writers and critics like Sanobar Hussain Kakaji, Dost Mohammad Khan Kamil and Qalandar Momand. It held regular sessions of practical criticism and Hamza Shinwari's *ghazals* used to be discussed most of all.

During this period *mushairas* (public recitations) were frequently held. An annual *mushaira* used to be held at the shrine of Rahman Baba. In one such *mushaira* Hamza was given the title of "the King of *Ghazals*" proposed by Samandar Khan Samandar and unanimously adopted. Since then he has been known as 'Baba-e Ghazal', the Father of Pashto Ghazals.

Due to his roving disposition, Hamza never stuck to one place. Probably for this reason alone he avoided regular service throughout his life. Once or twice for brief interludes he has joined some service in the political department and then in the railways resigning both at the earliest opportunity. In his early life he was strongly drawn to acting after having been thoroughly mesmerized first by the glitter and jingle of the early theatrical companies and then by the magic of the Silver Screen. Once he acted in a silent movie called "The Falcon". Then after seeing the first talkies, such as "Sherin Farhad" he was so inspired that he took up the road to Bombay with the vain hope of acting in a talkie. Although luck disappointed him in that misadventure, he was called upon by Rafiq Ghaznavi to write the script, dialogues and songs for the first ever Pashto film "Laila Majnun". He also played a minor role in that film. Thus he can be said to be the father of Pashto films also.

Rafiq Ghaznavi was also an intellectual but an atheist while Hamza Shinwari was a confirmed Sufi. While in Bombay in connection with the shooting of *Laila Majnun*, the two men were continuously debating the philosophy of ethics. After exhausting his dialectic repertoires Rafiq Ghaznavi hit upon a plot to ensnare Hamza in the lurid advances of the then well known actress, Sitara. She would come to him with a bottle-full of wine

and try to induce him to drink and have a jolly time with her; but he would stubbornly stick to his scruples. At the end of it all Rafiq Ghaznavi confessed to him that it was all arranged to test his moral calibre. He was happy that it wasn't dented after all. His moral superiority was fully acknowledged.

On the way back from Bombay Hamza went to Ajmir Sharif and visited the holy shrines of the saints. From there he went to Delhi where he went round more shrines and then met Khwaja Hassan Nizami who told him on first sight, "Your soil has been thoroughly ploughed but not yet sown with seeds." He then invited Hamza to take allegiance at his hands, and also gave him the manuscripts of a treatise on incantations and amulets with written permission. Khwaja Hassan Nizami already knew Malik Bawar Khan and, was only too pleased to meet his younger brother in Hamza Shinwari.

A Pashto monthly *Nan Parun* (Nowadays) used to be published from Delhi during the Second World War under the editorship of Maulana Abdul Qadir, who went on to become the founder Director of the Pashto Academy in Peshawar in 1955. Hamza used to be a regular contributor to that prestigious journal.

When the radio station was established in Peshawar in 1935, Hamza also was attached to it. He used to regularly write plays, talks, features and reviews for the radio. Once he was offered the job of a script writer which he declined in favour of his friend, Samandar Khan Samandar, but Hamza was the real backbone of the radio station. He wrote hundreds of plays and features for it. His plays like *Guman Da Eman Zyan De*, *Da Charsiano Badshah*, *Da Damano Khar*, *Da Sro Gota*, *Matali Shair*, *Khaisto* and *Zhranda Garhe*, etc. were repeatedly broadcast. In radio drama he started as an actor, doing the role of the judge in *Da Wino Jam* of Aslam Khattak, the first play broadcast from Peshawar. This inspired him to write his first play for the radio called *Zamindar*. His drama alone would rank him among the greatest Pashto writers even if he had written no poetry or prose.

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ISBN 978-969-418-080-9



University Publishers

A-1 Ground Floor, Afghan Market Near kabali Police Station,
Qissa Khani Peshawar. Ph: 091-2590061